

“Wa-pee Moos-tooch”

— or —

“White Buffalo”

The Hero of a Hundred Battles.

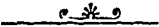
A Tale of Life in Canada's Great West During the Early  
Years of the Last Century.

Rev. John

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shoe,” “Path-finding on Plain and Prairie,” and “In the  
Days of the Red River Rebellion,” etc.

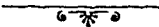
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*To My Devoted Wife this Book is  
Lovingly Dedicated.*  

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# White Buffalo, the Hero of the Plains



## CHAPTER I.

### In Which is Described the Land Wherein His People Dwelt.

**W**E OPEN OUR STORY in the early morning days of the last century. Of the white race only the intrepid adventurer having landed upon the shores of Hudson's Bay, and ascending the great water system tributary to it, was found in that immense extent of country, drained on the one slope by the *Wa-pe-sew* (or, in the English, Swan River) and on the other by the *Amisk-O-Seepe*, known in the latter days of the century as the Assiniboine. These big areas were at that time sparsely peopled by a portion of the Cree nation. These *Na-he-ya-wuk*, The Fit People, roamed from the Missouri River to the Arctic, and from the Columbia to the Labrador. Throughout all this immense land they spread themselves in feats of war and hunting. Absolutely

nomads, calling no place home, calling every place home, even as a living paradox, these men did live and move and have being. In the time of our story a branch of this big aboriginal nation claimed as their special possession the upland ranges of the two water systems, the Swan and the Beaver. The chief of the tribe, *Wa-Pe-Moostooch*, or White Buffalo, was a semi-wood, semi-plain Indian. In this duality, as the hunter of the forest, the moose and elk and cariboo, and all woodland game were his natural prey, and when the white man appeared, he by virtue of his environment became the great trapper, the successful hunter. On the other side of his life he was the plainsman, and at fitting periods he gathered his people and led them out to the great plain, and feasted them upon the choice portions of the wild cattle, which then, in countless numbers, cropped the western pastures. In all this life White Buffalo and his tribe developed strong qualities, which made them the most desired ally, and fur, and hunting, constituency of the trader who had come amongst them. The reader will note that we have given White Buffalo a dual capacity. The real woodsman would be strange upon the plain, and the real plainsman would be equally strange in the woods, and thus between these people, though belonging to the same nation, and speaking dialects of the same language, the line of distinction was strongly marked. But our chief, White Buffalo, and his people, inasmuch as they roamed the land wherein the forest and plain were forever at war, and each was penetrating into the domain of the

other, took on themselves the double character, and became adepts in the life of these two wonderfully distinct conditions.

At one season of the year White Buffalo moved his people northward, and dispersed them in the timber land, and over the great ranges of densely wooded hills; where the fur-bearing animals did breed; where the mink made the little pools of many creeks to fairly churn with their gambolings and with their number; where the otter looked and dove and landed the choicest fish; where the beaver dammed the stream and re-dammed the stream lower down or above as his colonizing instinct sent him forth, and almost from mouth to source of many creeks one standing beside the bubbling-water of this dam could in the stillness of the day distinguish the falling and splashing of the water of the other dams; for the beaver were all throughout this country in endless multitudes. Then where the spruce and jack pine forests grew, and out where the larch and birch and aspen flourished, the marten played among the trees, and sprang from branch to branch, and romped with their young, even as the domestic cat does with her kittens.

Amidst these woods the *Ojake* (the Fisher) made his way. He also was in rich number, and wandering over the hills and through the valleys the black, the brown and cinnamon bear did turn the logs and feasted upon the grubs, and scratched open the ant-hills, and extending their mouths and stretching out their tongues, and blinking their eyes, did glory in the thought that



presently myriad ants would cover these tongues, and the wily bear would lick in and repeat the act and smack his lips so long as there were ants to gather on his tongue. Then when the strawberries began to ripen, he sought the crimson beds and feasted to his fill. Then in turn came the rich, luscious raspberry, and while the morning dew was heavy on the bushes, the bear would leisurely wend his way, picking as he travelled, thus these bears did feast and fatten in these natural gardens.

Later the *Me-sas-quit* or blueberry tree would groan with its load of purple, juicy fruit, and now the bear was feasting sumptuously, and waxing strong and making ready for its winter lair, and thousands of its kind were doing likewise on the hillside slope, and in the rich valleys, and depths of the dark forest, and out upon the edges of the great plain.

Once in a while, and at long intervals, the great *Mis-ta-ya*, the grizzly, becoming dissatisfied with his fellows, and taking a pique towards all the grizzly kind, and even to the altitudes and foothill districts, and mountain canyons, wherein his ancestors had lived and flourished throughout the centuries, this individual grizzly would start down the slopes of the continent, and crossing the great plains, and sometimes following the windings of the big rivers which flow from the mountains easterly, he would suddenly appear even, as an apparition in the lowland districts of which we are writing. Then these far-away kin, the black, and the

brown, and the cinnamon, would give him respectful obeisance from the distance, and ambling away, would say:

"And now behold, we have seen our king!" The moose with his great ears would listen to the grizzly's heavy stepping and running to leeward would scent this new life, and lifting his head would say to himself:

"Strange, passing strange, my dam never told me of this one!" And the elk would see him, and gathering his following, would say:

"Behold, my children, and keep at a distance from this monster who has suddenly come amongst us!"

Only such a man as White Buffalo, and those of his kind, would dare with bow and quiver, and later with old flintlock, to waylay and try to kill the huge brute. Around camp fires, and in the lodges of these people strange tales were told of his great ferocity, and of his kingliness among all the beasts of this great western land, and yet, being men, they risked, and even like our hero, they conquered, for, hanging in his lodge were the claws and tusks of the mighty grizzly White Buffalo had slain.

Another of the fur-bearing animals was the lynx. These also periodically abounded, coming in great numbers, and again almost disappearing. When the rabbits were in the ascendancy and continuing to multiply, then the lynx came also, and when the rabbit was waning and mysteriously vanishing, and millions seemed to pass away, in like proportion the lynx also dis-

appeared. This animal served two purposes—its fur was clothing or trade, its meat was food—for after all what was the lynx, or the wildcat, as it was commonly called, but squirrel, or chicken, or rabbit, or deer, served up in another form, for all these were its common prey.

Sometimes a single lodge of Indian hunters snared and shot hundreds of these crafty creatures in a single season. Then one must not forget the muskrat, who also was periodical, even like the rabbit and lynx, coming and going in the great multitude. For two or three years the country would swarm with muskrats. Every pond, lake and marsh would be dotted with the habitations of these industrious little animals. Then the period of declension would arrive, and one might travel for days and hardly ever see a muskrat. Thus these little fur-bearing animals, the lynx and rabbit and muskrat, were both food and clothing and trade, and right here we will note that these, the lynx, the muskrat, the rabbit, especially the latter two, were interchangeable in their recurrence. When the rabbits were plentiful, the rats were few; when the rats were all over the land in great multitudes, rabbits were scarce. As the believing aboriginal would say:

“The Great Spirit has wisely arranged.”

In addition to what we have enumerated there came into this country in periodical migration numerous herds of buffalo. If men now living, even as we write, can call up in memory the fact of their having seen

millions of buffalo, what must the numbers of these great herds have been in the early parts of the last century? From the Gulf of Mexico to the shores of Great Slave Lake, throughout all the north and south and the central portion of this great continent, these tremendous herds wandered. Every few months a huge portion of a big herd would wend its way into the land of our story, pawing the ground, making countless dust pans, trampling the earth, making trails which remain innumerable even in our day; making the plains tremble with their roaring, and moving on into the north, they would take their course crossing the Qu'Appelle; ascending the Assiniboine on both banks, they would penetrate over the heights of land, and swarming down the valley of the Swan would continue their course until they had left Thunder Hill away in the south, and found themselves on the shores of the Great Lakes. These migrations sometimes took place in the autumn, but more frequently in the winter.

Strange it seemed to the ordinary mind that the buffalo went north in the winter rather than south, and the colder the winter, the farther north the buffalo would go. These huge animals fairly took possession of the country when the spirit of migration moved them in its direction. They pathed the forest; they cleaned the plains of their rich grass, they drank up the surplus water, and were it not that the land in which they roamed was so boundless, depletion, destruction and death would have been the unavoidable consequence.

And yet, notwithstanding that this country did abound in all that we have described, in its munificence of food and fur-bearing life, and notwithstanding that alongside with these great resources, the lakes and rivers were teeming with fish, yet nevertheless the aboriginal man had his periods of starvation. Sore and dire famine would cover the land in localities. The moose, where were they? The elk seemed to disappear. Rabbits became scarce. With them the lynx were rare, and the buffalo remained out on the plains, and were unreach-able to men situate as these Indians were in the begin-ning of the last century.

Contemporaneous with these conditions tribal war was constant. Spring and fall men everywhere were active on the war-path. The Cree and Salteaux gathered up their hosts and went south and west, seeking their hereditary foes, the Sioux and Blackfeet and Bloods and Pie-gans and Sarcees, who in their turn came northward and eastward hunting their enemies, the Crees and Salteaux. Scalps and slaves and plunder and glory were the ambitions of the people. To start from the Swan River and to travel south and west onto the plains bordering on the Missouri, or up to the foot-hills of Montana, or into what is now Southern Alberta, would be the experience of many an Indian belonging to the tribe of White Buffalo.

Just about this time, or a little previous, horses became a strong factor and incentive on these war expeditions. From the beginning of the Spanish con-

quest in America, the horse had thrived on this western hemisphere, and gradually worked its way northward until of the time we write quite a few of the horse kind were north of the forty-ninth parallel, and wherever they were seen and their qualities known, men coveted them, and sought after them eagerly. It became a passion with the red man to desire to own horses. If taking the scalp of your enemy was meritorious, how much greater the glory to take his horses! This wonderful animal that would carry the hunter or warrior on his back, and from which vantage place even the white bison might be killed; this long-legged *Mistatim*, or big dog, who could carry as much as ten ordinary dogs, why it was great glory to bring him from the plains of Missouri, even to the plains of the Assiniboine and the Swan. As late as in the sixties and early seventies, it was common to say:

"Bringing them in," and not "stealing" horses.

The gossip between the lodges never spoke of "stealing" horses—he "brought them in," "they ran them in." "Did you see that bunch of horses? He just now brought them home."

No imputation of theft was thought of. It was a meritorious act. Such feats of cunning, and skill, and acts of daring as were accomplished in running off another man's horses, were lauded and placed the actor away above par among his fellows. To have brought many scalps home made the warrior wonderfully conspicuous, and repeatedly to return from the land of the enemy with bands of horses gave the hero prominence and respect among his fellows.

CHAPTER II.

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His Childhood and Early Teachers.

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**I**T WAS into great territory such as we have described, and into conditions such as we have depicted, that White Buffalo came as inheritor therein. His childhood was like that of multitudes of the children of the forest and the plain. But his boyhood gave evidence of a strong individuality, and in all that affected the education of his time, the lad was widely awake. When other boys were sliding downhill on pieces of bark or on little toboggans made of the long ribs of the buffalo, this boy was sitting in the lodge of *Atoos-o-Kao*, the arrow maker, watching the expert handiwork, as with deftness the old warrior placed the flint in the head of the seasoned *Mis-as-quit*, or blueberry stick, and fastened this with the sinew of the great bull, and taking the other end, with precision and mathematical placement he arranged feathers and secured them to the arrow. As the old man thus plied his trade, the coming man was asking his questions. How about the land away in the far west; how about the regions that lie under the

midday sun. For the old arrow maker was renowned as one who had travelled far and had seen much, and he gave White Buffalo lessons in geography. He told of the interlacing of the great river system, where the waters of the Saskatchewan and Missouri entwined themselves and seemed as one. He told of the great hill countries on the plain *Moose-wa-che*, (Moose Mountains), the *Mis-tik-wa-che*, or Woody Mountains, and still farther west on the great upland, the *Me-nah-tuh-gow*, the beautiful forests, known today as the Cypress Hills, and farther still the *We-kusk-wa-che*, or sweet grass buttes, and as the boy listened and his eyes opened, while the old man described this far-away land, the arrow maker would say:

"And now away towards the setting sun, my grandchild, if you would lift your eyes, you would behold great mountains, the backbone of the world," and he would tell of snow that never melts, and of the ice that seemed forever growing, and the little White Buffalo would say:

"And, my grandfather, what is beyond?" And the old man would look at the lad in reproach and say: "Have I not told you enough?" And the boy would drop his eyes and reply: "Oh, my grandfather, surely you have told me enough—it is wonderful!"

The fact was that the old man did not know what was beyond, for even then, as it is now, men were reluctant to confess their ignorance. And now came the next question.



"And what took you there, my grandfather?" And the old man would tell this keen listener of many a war expedition into the land of the Sioux, and again into the country of the Blackfoot tribes. Thus White Buffalo was acquiring his education.

Another day would find him in the lodge of the *O-me-tao*, the medicine man, and *O-me-tao* would astonish the boy with his lesson at medicine making, medicine that was strong in war, and made the person of the owner invulnerable; medicine that reached out from him who was fortunate enough to possess it, and, like wireless telegraphy, flew through space and met the enemy afar and paralyzed sense and limb, so that he became the easy victim of his foe. *O-me-tao* told him of medicine which cast a spell upon the sentinel who was standing guard over the coveted horse, and his limbs would slacken, and his eyes would droop, and an irresistible drowsiness would come upon him, and thus the possessor of this potent medicine could slip quietly in, and take almost out of the hand of the owner his much-loved horse. Then as the warrior rode away into the darkness astride his capture, he would fling back a derisive yell which would hardly arouse the poor victim from his sleep. *O-me-tao* would continue to tell, as the boy intensely listened to the story of his art, of the power of his medicine in hunting:

"But touch the arrow with it, and it would not miss, but pierce to the death the prey the hunter was after. Rub a little of this on the mocassin, and the

trapper would be sure that all fur-bearing animals that came upon his trail would follow on until they became victims of his cunningly set traps and snares. Faintly touch the bait of the deadfall with this wonderful medicine and the marten would be sure to go in. Smear but a little upon a tuft of grass shoved into the end of a split stick, and this in turn put in through the hidden snare and stuck in the snow behind the bar, with the snare fastened to it, and the lynx would put his head through and be caught"—and then the old man would look up at the boy and would say :

"You are young yet, my child, but some day as the winters pass, you will come to me, and I will tell you about my wonderful love medicine," and the growing lad would answer, "Surely there is time enough for that, my grandfather."

Another day White Buffalo in his eager pursuit after knowledge would slip into the lodge of *O-ni-pis-kao*, the one who acted death, the man who intoned his creed, and chanted his hymn, and under the influence of his own intensity, having possibly hypnotized himself, and gone into a trance, and thus for the time was like one who is dead, and then his spirit went afar into the unknown and again in due time came from thence, and re-occupying what had seemed to be his inanimate body, *O-ni-pis-kao* would tell of strange and marvellous scenes; and White Buffalo would listen to the supernatural. Thus *O-ni-pis-kao* took his young pupil into regions afar and unknown, and unseen by the

ordinary mortal. These were some of the lines of White Buffalo's education. They fired him with ambition to become in his own time like these men, a great traveller, a big medicine man, and also familiar with that which is mysterious and extraordinary. In the meanwhile he was learning the practical side of life, by becoming expert as a marksman. Already he was part of the commissariat. When very young he had killed his first *Peyao*, or prairie chicken, as his father had said:

"Now, my son, I must make a big hunt, for according to the custom of our people, your mother will have to prepare a great feast, inasmuch as our little boy has brought in his first game."

And the father went forth and killed the buck moose, and the mother brought forth her bag of dried berries, and the people feasted and sang, "White Buffalo is a hunter," and the boy was launched out into the life of his time. Soon he became expert in the use of snares and deadfalls. Presently his father took him with him on his hunting trips, and beside many a camp fire he listened to tales of prowess and skill in the chase. To excel in all these pursuits became the boy's great ambition, and to do this, he went farther, and risked more than the ordinary lads of his age in the camps. When in the timber belts, and in the more secure places, in the lands where the plains people would shrink from coming, and while the rest of the camp was feasting, White Buffalo roamed, always alone, and thus a strong independence took hold of his nature. He was hunting

for himself. He was seeing the world from his own viewpoint. Many a deer he killed with bow and quiver, and was greatly delighted when his mother made him moccasins out of the hides of the moose of his own slaying. Few boys of his age started out as early in life as White Buffalo had done. One day he encountered a bear, and wounding the animal with his arrow, the bear turned on him, and the boy fought him and killed him with his scalping knife. His mother did chide him because of his lack of care, but his father said:

"Well done, my son."

In the winter seasons he went with his father on long trips to set snares for wildcats. Presently he asked permission to go of his own account and set a line of snares, and a very proud boy was White Buffalo when he had caught his first lynx and proved to his mother that he had learned his lesson in this art. He watched his father making deadfalls, and again he went on his own line of march, and set up his deadfalls, and after a few days he walked into camp with several marten hanging from his belt. As the snow deepened his father bent for him the snowshoe stick, and made the frame neat and right and proportionate to his size, and his mother smiled as the mothers of the race have always smiled as she deftly wove in the deer or caribou rawhide strings, both small and big, as was needed to complete the snowshoes. White Buffalo had often put his father's big snowshoes on and tramped around the camp. So now, with pride he tied his own neat shoes

to his feet, and throwing his bow and quiver over his neck and across his back, he started out into the forest, feeling that at last he indeed was growing to manhood. Great good fortune seemed to follow our boy hero, for on this very first day of his long tramp on his own snowshoes, he came across the den of a big black bear, and full of ambition he dared to rouse the bear from his early winter sleep, and was successful in killing him. Many a boy in the camp that night was filled for the moment with envy, as it was noised abroad, "White Buffalo had found and killed a big black bear today."

And then he drove the envious feeling from his heart, and said to those around him, "I am glad, for if we live, some day White Buffalo will be my *O-gimao* (Chief). There was something in the makeup of this child of the forest and plain which made his fellows conscious that he was greater than they. In a dispute among the boys in the camp some one would say, "Here comes White Buffalo, he will settle it." Shooting at a difficult target, if there should arise a contention among the marksmen, it was left to White Buffalo, and whatever he said was accepted by all. Some great fight which had become history in the records of their people might be related by one of the boys to the listening crowd of younger ones. And another lad would speak up and say: "Ah, there now you have forgotten, that is not the way it occurred. It was *Ma-iekun*, the Wolfe, who led our people, not the *Ma-ka-sou*, the Fox, as you have said just now." And each

boy would contend for his version, and then all would appeal to White Buffalo, and he would set them straight in their history.

Thus the lad became the chief among the boys in the camp, without himself aspiring to the position in any wise.

And now he was up in his teens, and one day he went to the priest of the camp and said to him:

"My grandfather, tell me of the faith of our people. Tell me what men mean when they say *Opa-akun*, meaning 'the one he dreams about.'"

And the seer did make answer: "You know, my child, there are two great spirits, *Keshamanito*, the great merciful spirit; and the *Machimanito*, the evil spirit. The *Keshamanito* is the Creator. He made the Heaven and the earth. Moreover, he is the upholder. The sun and the moon shine at his bidding. Winter and spring, summer and autumn come at his call. He makes the snow melt, and the rivers run full. He calls the grass and it springs from the ground. He says unto the flowers 'Come forth and smile and be glad.' He hangs the fruit on the vine and on the tree. He tells the birds when to fly north and where to make nest. He says to the wild fowl, 'This is your nesting time, this is your moulting season.' He speaks and they come from the south and spread themselves in our land. He says to the buffalo and to the moose and to the elk, and to all the deer kind, 'This is your mating season,' and gathering herds listen to his voice. He creams the grass

when it is full grown; he paints the forest; he blows with his wind and the leaves fall. He breathes with his nostril and the north wind comes, and the buffalo draw in from the great plain, and sniffing the chill of the coming winter, say: 'We will travel into the forest lands of the north country. We will cross the *Ka-na-na-wa-o-gamag* (the chain of lakes and rivers today called the Qu'Appelle). We will wash our feet in the waters of the *Amiskosecpe*, the Beaver River. We will cross the *Askawawe Seepe*, the open water river, (now known as the South Saskatchewan); yea, we will go on into the country across the Big Saskatchewan.'

"And in this way many peoples are fed and clothed. Thus my child you will see how full of mercy, how wise in his great plans the *Keshamanito* is. Forever you will speak of him with reverence; forever you will think of him with love; for this life he has done everything needful. The mountains from whence flow the great rivers, the great plains on which feed the countless-herds, the big forest lands, the home of many animals full of blessing to man, the lakes and rivers wherein move the fish, and upon whose waters swarm the birds, the sunshine and darkness, the summer and the winter, are all his provision for us children whom he does love with a constant love."

And White Buffalo's heart would swell as he thought of this wonderful being. And the old man would go on with his recital:

"And this is not all, my child. The *Keshamanito* has provided another world for his children. We know but little about it, my child, but our people have forever believed in it. Someone must have told them about that other world. How else could they know? They say it is surpassingly beautiful. Sometimes I have climbed to the top of the big hill, and the day was quiet, and this earth was glad, and I looked and beheld, and my spirit seemed satisfied. And I said: 'Great, great is *Keshamanito*!' But, my child, they tell me that this other world is away and beyond in beauty, in richness, in happiness, and our people for ages have called it the *Mewaemoaske*—the Happy Land. Thus, my child, you will always love *Keshamanito*. But this other spirit, this evil spirit"—and the old man lowered his voice and spoke in hushed tones.

"He has wonderful power in this world that we now live in. He can bring in sickness and famine. He can put it into the heart of the buffalo leader to say unto the herd, 'Let us not go north at this time,' and the herd will listen, and the people of this north country, and all over this land, will starve and die in consequence. He can, my child, coax the north wind to stay away in his northern home, and the snows will keep him company, and here up and down the banks of these rivers, and all through these forest-covered hills, the grass is crisp and dry, the leaves are forever speaking as you walk. The frozen twigs are brittle and snap almost without your having touched them, and all the land is



full with voices, which speak into the ear of the deer and the moose, and the elk and all food-making animals, and they bound away from your presence, and the most cunning of our hunters will come home weary and faint, having failed, and there is crying in our lodges, and the children are hungry, and the mothers are sad, and the father's heart heavy. For this evil spirit is against him.

"Again, our enemies seem to have gained his favor, and are for the time being victorious over us. Our bravest men are foiled, our scouts, keen eyed and keen scented, and trained as they are, act for a while as if they were under a spell, as if their eyes had dimmed, as if their ears had dulled, as if their whole sense was away from its usual condition. And our war parties stumble into ambushes, and are discovered by the enemy, and our bravest men are slain, and there is mourning and sadness in our camp. The evil spirit is offended. Our people have lost his favor. Then, my son, we make vows, and we offer sacrifice, and when the midsummer time comes, we gather our people and build a great thirst dance lodge, and all who have vowed fulfil their vows by fasting and thirsting, and punishment of the body, and constant petition. Then it will come to pass that the evil spirit will be pleased, and remove the blight he had cast upon us. Then our hunters will kill game, and our warriors are victorious, and our people are healthy, and we sacrifice to this evil spirit all the while remembering that the great father is forever good unto us, his children."

This was White Buffalo's student day. These were his teachers, and with the passing of the years he became an adept in the creeds and traditions and mythologies of his race.—By this time White Buffalo had become a skillful hunter. Ordinary deer were his frequent victims. The great elk had felt the sharp thrust of his unerring arrow, and bounding away wondered what was the matter with his breath, but after a few leaps fell choking to the earth with the outgushing of his own life blood. White Buffalo had already learned the art or science of circumventing the most cunning of all animals, the moose. The moose, the animal unto whom mother earth had given the great ear, which, turning almost in every direction caught a sound from afar, and kept this keen-eared animal forever on the alert. This big creature, with the ponderous nose, which seemed to reach out into space and become conscious of all things for miles around, had, notwithstanding, become the prey of the stronger-brained and more cunning hunter. White Buffalo very soon was known as having a fine sense of judgment, as to where the great buck moose might be taking his afternoon siesta. The ordinary hunter would make his mistake and give his scent to the game, and thus the moose, early forewarned, moved out of the way. Not so with White Buffalo. He took the topography of the landscape. He saw the winding of the valley, and the reaching out of the forest-clad hill. He felt the wind and with wonderful precision calculated its currents over the hills and through the valleys. He took the time of the day, and then made his calculations.

"Here is the big track. This is the mid-morning trail. Away yonder he circled, and there he came back, and now he is chewing his cud in this thicket."

So he turned from the track and went the other way in his circle, and coming back found the trail, and now with the wind in his face, all he had to do was to stalk quietly onto the prey. Then, with his best arrow pulled to the barb, he would let it slide into the immense carcass of the bull moose. Seldom did one so young as White Buffalo accomplish the feat of killing a moose.

## CHAPTER III.

*His First Buffalo Hunt.*

**H**ORSES were not plentiful in the northern country at the time of which we write. However, White Buffalo's father had a few. And among them one of the best in the land. This horse was known in all the camp as fleet and long-winded. His name was Blackfoot. He had been taken during battle from the Blackfeet. The war party had travelled far before they came into the vicinity of the camp of the Crees, and this horse's hoofs were worn out, and smooth with the crispy grass of the southern and western plains. And when the enemy made their charge, and the Crees were defending their camp, and finally turned their enemies back, this horse was abandoned by his owner, and fell into the hands of White Buffalo's father, he being foremost in the race, and he caught the horse and took him into camp, and was rejoiced to find that when his hoofs were grown and the horse was recuperated from the long journey, that he possessed one of the best horses in the country. It was a great day when White Buffalo was told by his father:

"My son, you can ride Blackfoot today when we come to the buffalo. Come, now, let us see what you can do on the back of a horse."

White Buffalo very well knew that the horse was sure, and that if there was any fault in the hunt it would be owing to his own lack of skill or want of courage. So every boy and girl in the camp would say. But knowing White Buffalo as they did they did not prophecy any failure for him. Ah, but it was a proud morning for our young hunter when with a company of his people he rode away from the camp astride an ordinary pony, and leading Blackfoot by his side, even as men were wont to do, thus sparing their runner to the last moment. Only those who have had similar experience can imagine how the boy did feel.

"Now, then, put your saddles on your runners, and see to your girths and stirrup strings, and look to your bowstring. See that they are true and strong. Straighten your arrows, make ready your guns. Sharpen the flint. Rasp up the steel. Put fresh powder in the pan. Now, be smart!"

Thus spoke the capain of the hunt. And presently White Buffalo was on the back of the famous Blackfoot, and Blackfoot was quivering with his nerves all astrung, as he looked across the plain on the familiar scene, and watched the great herd moving to and fro, and listened to the big bulls roaring like thunder, and pawing the earth, and shaping the dust pans, which seen a hundred

years later are as evidence of our story. White Buffalo felt his horse gathering himself under him, and seeming to say, with a quiver of his powerful frame:

"Yes, White Buffalo, it is up to you to do the killing, for we verily will give you the chance. We have taken bigger men than you into the heart of the fleeing herd, and it remains to be seen whether they were better skilled than you are."

This was the challenge which rang in White Buffalo's ears as he sat that horse on that glorious morning in the early days of the last century. And now the captain of the hunt gave the signal, and the party moved towards where the dust was rolling up in clouds heavenward, for mother earth was being pounded and scraped and scratched, and she seemed to shake herself in her revolution, and left great clouds of dust in her course. Blackfoot instinctively felt the quality of the boy-man he was carrying. The noble horse had carried many men from his colthood until even now he was in his maturity and strength. He had studied human nature, and being a great horse his perceptions were also great, and today by his every move he was saying to himself, "This is no common fellow who bestrides me now."

A few canters forward, and man and horse became consonant, one felt the other, each to the very depths of his nervous being said, "Aha, we have found each other." The horse was saying, "I will run as never before. I will keep in reserve sufficient wherewith to watch badger holes and dust pans, and rough country

we will charge over. I will help the noble boy to pick the fattest in the herd. I am old in this work. He is but now venturing. I will coach him. I will give him time to draw his bow and let fly his arrow." Thus Blackfoot soliloquized, and White Buffalo, feeling the elastic stepping, the free movement, the whole-souled response of his noble steed to the faintest touch of his knee or hand, to the swaying of his body and life, said to himself, "I will do my best. I will try and shoot my straightest. The Great Spirit will help me. The Evil Spirit will not withstand me. And Blackfoot and White Buffalo will make the people of our lodge proud today."

On they rode. Now it was a sharp canter, now the little company of hunters were all abreast, the captain a short distance in advance of the line. The outskirts of the herd were bounding in towards the great masses. Thousands were beginning to move quickly. Tens of thousands were all on the qui vive, and the earth seemed to tremble. The rolling, galloping, surging, stampeding mass and crash of huge life, gathering up for this race away from its strongest enemy, the puny child of feeble man. And yet, thus it has been since the commission went forth, and the great words were spoken into the ears of the beginnings of the human family: "Subdue it." Leviathan trembles at the voice of the man child. The king of the beasts stands abashed, and his courage oozes away at the glance of him born of woman. "Mind over matter"; and today this little company of northern

Indians, leaving their forest homeland and venturing into the borders of the great plain, armed with only bow and quiver, and here and there a single-barreled flintlock pot-metal gun, charged forth, and tens of thousands of monster bulls and countless numbers of cows and young stock dash away with all their speed to flee the presence of this wonderful being. Now our hunters have been given the signal, and every horse is loosed. Each rider is bowed on the neck of his steed, and soon they are in the dust cloud, and close upon the herd, and the hunter starts in to pick his game. Here the great skill is manifest. Many a man could kill, but only a few could pick under the excitement and medley of the great run of the buffalo on the plain. White Buffalo felt through his whole being the excitement of the race. With his left hand he holds a bow and a couple of arrows. With his right he guides his steed, but with such a horse as Blackfoot there was little need of this. At this time ordinary bridles had not come into the great west. Lariat in the mouth and the loop of this over the neck of the horse, and the balance of its great length carefully coiled and tucked under the belt of our boy hunter. Thus man and horse are parting the herd. White Buffalo is silent, but he is sending telepathic messages to the brain of Blackfoot, and Blackfoot's little ears move back with quick assent, and his every action says, "Just let me know the one you pick; just touch me with your knee, right or left; never fear, White Buffalo. Heed not badger holes, I am looking out for



them." And presently White Buffalo sees a magnificent animal. It is the first summer hunt, and the bulls are prime, and this great huge monster, who had caught the eye of the young hunter, is thundering away through the herd as fast as his wind and speed will let him. But already Blackfoot has noted White Buffalo's choice, and now again he sends the message to his rider, "Steady your nerve, my boy; be ready, don't pull the bow until I tell you." And White Buffalo glances along the arrow to see if it is straight, and he drops his lariat upon the horse's neck, and he settles his thin moccassin-covered feet with a mighty grip upon the wooden stirrup. And with every muscle and nerve tense, he waits a signal from his horse. The big bull now knows he is the picked one, and being chased, and he spurts in the race for life. But Blackfoot is coming up stride upon stride. His jump is one and one-half of that of the bull. Sometimes double is the leap of the strong elastic horse, and now he sends the signal and the boy feels the time has come. And again the message, "Pull, pull and let go," and White Buffalo pulls, and with unerring skill the arrow speeds its course, and, penetrating the hide of the huge beast, it goes on and on into the vitals of its game.

"Well done, White Buffalo," says Blackfoot. "Well done, my boy, I am proud to carry you on my back. Pick another," and White Buffalo, exultant in the success of his first shot, as he sees the bull stagger, and the blood gushes from his nostrils in full volume. He

hurriedly looks at the topography of the place. The little sloping hill, the curve of the valley, thus he marks the spot. And now again his quick eye is upon the herd, and soon he sees a better animal than the first one, and at once, with a touch of his knee, he sends his willing steed straight for his game. But now one of the other hunters has caught sight of the same big bull, and as he is near to the course of the animal's run, he thinks he can catch him and make him his prey. However, he has not reckoned with Blackfoot, for the noble horse feels that it is his chance to show speed and win the race against his fellow-horse. And away he rushes and with every jump he fills White Buffalo's heart with gladness. For he and White Buffalo are gaining fast. A few more jumps and they are abreast the rival and his rider, and the latter wisely turns for other game, as Blackfoot and White Buffalo fly past and quickly catch their second prize. Back twitches Blackfoot's ear, and White Buffalo is all ready.

If Darwin could have seen those toes grip those stirrups, and every muscle in this boy make ready to stand in order to become the more certain in his aim, he would have said:

"And it is not so long since."

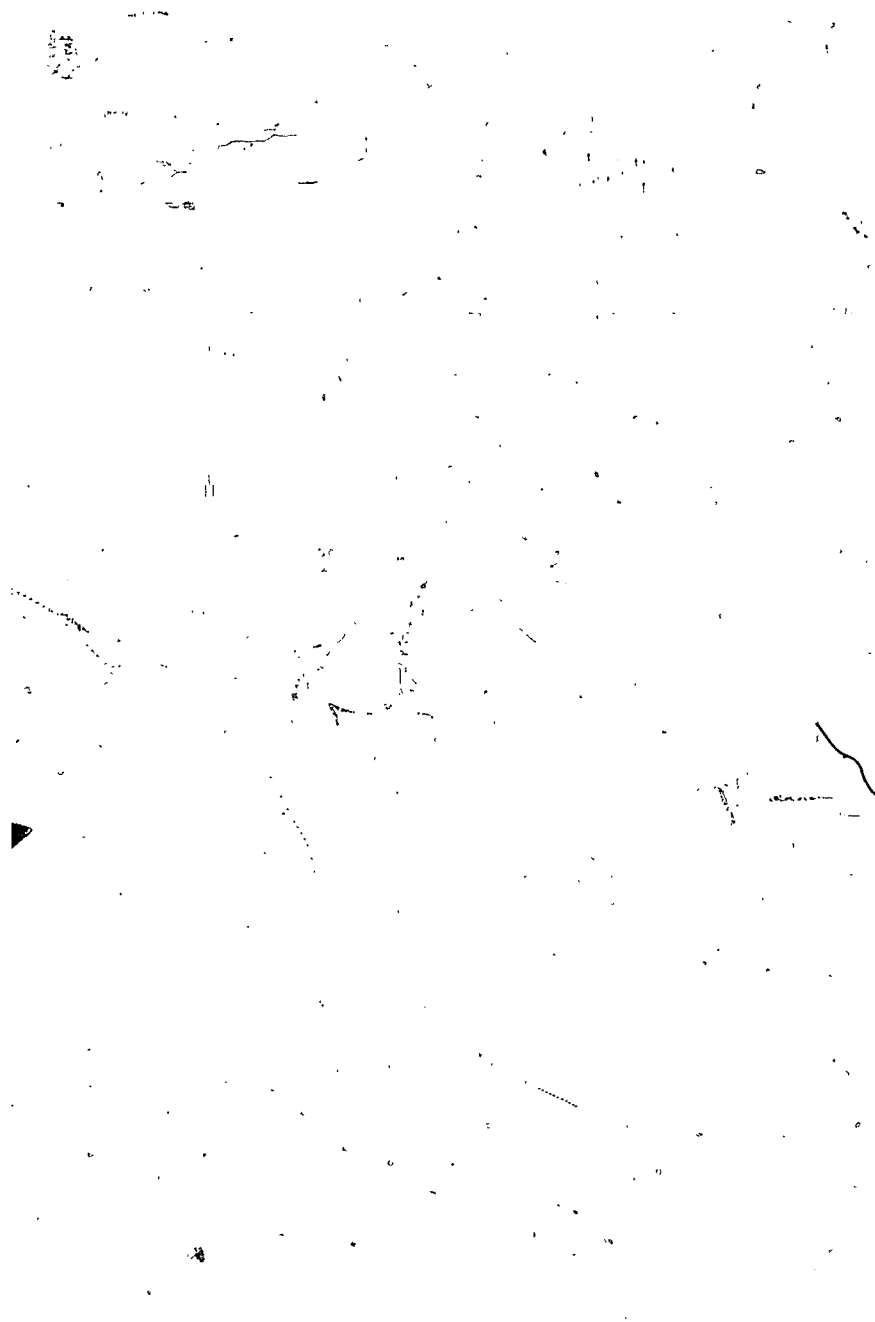
Once more the bow is pulled the arrow's length, and again with a sharp, rich twang he lets it go, and as before it enters where it should, and piercing the mortal spot, does its work. And a second stronger thrill of joy and conquest stirs White Buffalo's heart and brain.

"Bravo, my young rider!" again speaks the old hunting warrior horse, and again White Buffalo looks among the thousands, and encouraged with his previous choice, becomes more critical, and looks and looks, and presently says to himself, "Ah, there is the one I want to kill." And again he touches Blackfoot with his knee, and off like an arrow from the bow speeds the self-trained willing horse after the game set before him. And now, for the third time, the signals come, "Make ready!" and White Buffalo pulls the arrow from the quiver on his back and looks along it to see if it is straight, and Blackfoot gathers speed at every jump and says:

"Now, pull your bow, let go your arrow," for Blackfoot knew vastly more of distance and of this kind of hunting than White Buffalo possibly could. Again the big bull is mortally hit, and the boy checks his steed and pulls him up, and both horse and rider watch the death throes of their kill. Soon some of the other hunters come and admire the boy's choice, and help him to straighten up the monster. This is no small task, for it requires a strong lift to straighten up and make ready for skinning and butchering one of these kings of the plain. Then White Buffalo went back to his second and first kills, and on the way met the following from the camp with the pack horses and dogs, and his people were glad when they saw the result of our hunter's first race after the great herds.



*His First Big Run.*



When White Buffalo had turned over his killed to the women and boys who had brought the horses and dogs which were to pack the meat home, he gave his attention to Blackfoot, whom he rubbed and wiped down and caressed as a dear friend, and talked to him and the horse understood and responded in his way. The boy was proud of the horse, the horse was proud of the boy. However, just then who should gallop up but *Kenabikwawan*, or Snake Skin, a boy about the same age as White Buffalo, but who had always since they were little children together tried to match and surpass White Buffalo if he could in all games in childhood, and later in trapping and hunting, but had been out-classed and left behind by White Buffalo, and because of this had grown to hate his rival. Today he had been filled with envy as he heard many speak in tones of pride and praise because of White Buffalo's manner of riding his father's horse, and the quickness and deftness of his killing the three great bulls. And now he could not help but vent his spleen upon the little group who were gathered around, skinning and cutting up the large animals.

"Aha," said he, "And is this one of White Buffalo's starvelings? Where were his eyes when he had so large a herd to pick from? Anyone riding a horse like Blackfoot should kill better meat than this. Say, White Buffalo, don't let Blackfoot look this way. It will hurt his feelings to see how poor the meat is which you have killed from his back. Take your horse away,

White Buffalo, or he never will let you ride him again!" Thus he mocked and jeered at White Buffalo's first kill from the back of the great running horse.

White Buffalo heard Snake Skin mocking and jeering, and, being modest, thought perhaps he had come short in his choice and pick. But just then an old hunter rode up and exclaimed as he looked at the splendid meat that was now spread on the plain:

"Woh, woh! Who killed this fat beast? I have not seen one as good for many a day." And White Buffalo's heart was cheered, and Snake Skin remounted his horse and rode away, feeling greater hatred than ever towards his fellow. There was great rejoicing in the lodges when the tidings were brought in of White Buffalo's splendid run. His friends among the boys and girls in the camp were full of our hero's exploits.

"Why," said one, "He never missed a shot!"

"Yes," said another, "He only used three arrows and killed three great bulls, and ran but a little way."

Then another fellow came running up. "I was there," he rode in to see the fun. I saw White Buffalo make the charge. Oh, how quick he picked the first bull! And the horse seemed to pick the bull at the same time. My, my! What a horse Blackfoot is! He gains speed with every jump. I saw my friend fire his first shot. I saw the bull stagger and fall aside. I saw White Buffalo pick another. Why, it was just as if I were sitting on a horse beside him. I saw Blackfoot catch him quick. Again I watched my friend pull the

bow. I was too far away to see the arrow fly, but I know that the bull was hit. Soon he dropped aside. Then I knew that White Buffalo saw another. I seemed to feel the horse jump under me as Blackfoot rushed away after this one. I was riding as fast as my horse would take me to watch this glorious sport. Again I knew that my friend had shot, for I saw the great big bull stagger and drop aside. I tell you, boys, I felt happier than if I could do such deeds myself, because this was our boy chief whom we love, and who always leads us in that which is strong and brave."

And this chatter and description rang like sweet music in the ears of the father and mother, as they sat within the lodge and listened to the story of the hunt from their people. Both the horse and rider were dear to the hearts of these parents.

White Buffalo being praised was a familiar tale, but this new enterprise in which their son had been so successful, it truly filled their hearts with joy. Later that evening older men and hunters brave and skillful dropped into their lodge, and eulogy and praise were meted out both to the horse and his youthful rider. Said one renowned hunter:

"After this, we older men must look out for this young blood who has startled us today with his pluck and skill." "Yes," said a wise old man, "We are glad to know that you, White Buffalo, will be able to lead our young men on the great plains as well as in the woods."



After the guests left that night, the father quietly spoke and said:

"I am glad, my child, that you did so well today. Your mother and I are very proud. We thank the Great Spirit for giving us a son like you are. We hope for you skill in hunting, and brave deeds in war. Keep your heart warm, my son; act friendly to everybody, and never do anything that you would be ashamed of. And now that you have shown that you are a good horseman, and did so well in your first race after buffalo on the plain, you can call Blackfoot yours."

And the boy looked up, and the father saw a full measure of gladness and joy in his son's eye. No more words passed between these happy parents and the grateful child. Thus the morning and the evening of this eventful day in the life of our hero passed away. Many days like this followed, and White Buffalo grew and waxed strong. Blackfoot was as the apple of his eye. Miles and miles he walked and ran and saved his horse for the race that was sure to come.

## CHAPTER IV.

*A Lone Northern Expedition.*

**A**S EVER IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE, the moons waxed and waned, and the seasons came and went, and the people were in the timber country, the camp having moved northward. And once more White Buffalo was out afield, and at his familiar work, namely, the hunting of woodland game. He was at this time about nineteen years of age, medium height, straight and strong, swift on foot, and full of muscle. He could pull the stiffest bow; he could run the short race with the quickest in the camp, and already it was said he was long-winded, and had won several long races. We will run with him some day, but just now we have a better story to tell concerning White Buffalo's life.

It was autumn; the world was full of glory. Certainly White Buffalo's world was full of glory. Summer rich and rank and full had gently passed away, and autumn, ripe and rank, had come and grasped the field. Her hand was busy painting the landscape, tinting the

hill slopes, crowning the summits, bathing in rich color the valley. And the pulse of her strong life was stirring the blood of all who dwelt in the forest, or who ran and fed across the plains. Nature's mating season had come. The moose and elk and the handsome deer of many kinds knew this was the fact. Some one seemed to whisper, and the bleating of the deer, the calls of the moose, were common sounds in the early morning, and in the waning of the day, and even through the silent night. It was in such a time and amid such scenes, and with a sounding of such calls in the ears that White Buffalo found himself far from camp and in new country where, until now, he had never been. And yet such was the influence of the time and scene that on he went, and as he went he said: "I am too far to seek to kill; it would be too distant to come and bring the meat and hides. No, no; I will not kill in this country, even should I have a good chance. But I will go on, and as the day passes I will seek a rabbit or partridge and camp tonight in this strange new land. And reaching tomorrow the summit of yonder distant hill, I will hope to see what is beyond."

Ah, this has always been the thought and language of those somewhat braver than the rest in this life's long quest. They have lifted their eyes to the hills beyond and fain would reach the summit, but when they seem to reach, behold, the summit is still beyond. When will mortal vision reach the highest level and see as seen?

Our hero camped that night beside a spring whence bubbled the choicest water, fresh and clean. He had slipped an arrow from his bow and hit a rabbit, and again he twanged the bow and the partridge fell at his feet, and with the rabbit and the partridge in his belt, he came as by instinct to the very fountain head of this splendid spring, and his heart leaped in gratitude to Him above, the great creator, the ever good, whose heart is always full of love. Here he made camp. He broke the bows of the balsam, whose fragrance was as incense sweet. He made his fire. All day with careful eye he had watched for sign of human being, but seen it not. So far as he knew he was alone. Though the native of a great big country, and himself one of a few people, who in tribes and in camps, sometimes large, sometimes small, forever roamed this region, yet nevertheless this was White Buffalo's first night absolutely without human companionship. Doubtless he was a wise man who is reported as saying, "It is not good for man to be alone." All day White Buffalo had steadily crossed the country; all day his trained eye had watched for fresh traces of humanity, and now he found himself as sole representative of his kind in this great wilderness. But a sense of his mission gave him company. Speculating on this he built up his camp fire, and plucked his partridge and skinned his rabbit and cut the *opwanask* or roasting stick, and broiled his game, and all the while was wondering what might be his fortune. Later, curling up in his autumn robe, he slept

the sleep of strenuous youth. Glorious condition, when the heart beats regularly, and every nerve is strong, and life is in the morning of its sweetness, and bright visions and pleasant dreams are forever stirring the thought! Thus our young hunter slept until the day sky dawned. Then hastily making his toilet in the running waters of the spring, and finishing the little left of the game, he pursued his journey.

The hill was distant, and in the freshness of the morning he made haste towards it. The sun was high in the heavens when he stood on the summit and looked upon the great land stretching down towards the big lake. Thus far he had not discerned the sign of humanity, but now, carefully scanning the sloping of the country at his feet, presently he saw the thin dim spire of a column of what seemed to be the smoke from a single lodge. "Ah," he thought, "that is not a forest fire, that must be where someone's camp is, and I will carefully approach, and find out who they are."

Having thus determined, White Buffalo sat him down and took the little mirror from the pouch on his breast, and untied the small bags of buckskin which held his paints, and, smoothing his braids, and fixing his hair, he painted his face according to the manner of his people. Having thus arranged his toilet, he carefully inspected his bow, and saw that the string was true and strong. He took several arrows from his quiver and straightened them wherever they needed it. He took a pair of moccasins which were hanging in his belt, and

put them on, in the meanwhile carefully stretching those he had been wearing, so that they might dry as he travelled. Then he set out for the distant smoke. All this time he had been watching the action of this smoke, and he was now pretty sure that it came from a lodge fire. Carefully and only as men of his breed can did he approach what turned out to be a lone lodge. The spot surrounding this was gloriously beautiful. Thickly wooded hills and symmetrical forest, alternating valley and upland lent rich variety to the scene. A small stream made its circuitous winding down the valley, and in a nook among the trees, where a beaver meadow was struggling against the encroaching progress of the forest, stood the moose-skin lodge. For here was the moving home of a wood and lake hunting Cree. These people whose camp White Buffalo was now approaching had never gone south on to the plains. Moose and caribou and beaver and bear and rabbit formed a part of their diet. These might be termed their upland food. The rest of their fare was made up of fish and fowl. As White Buffalo took in the scene he said to himself, "These are the *Sakowweenewuk*, the forest people. Now for the first time in my life do I behold one of their lodges."

Several wood animal hides were stretched on frames and leaning up against the trees around the lodge. Slowly, silently, stealthily, craftily, White Buffalo approached the lodge. Not even the dogs felt his presence. Keenly watching for humanity, he saw a

woman, evidently the wife and mother in this lodge, come out and begin to scrape one of these hides. He wondered what language these people would speak, and as if in answer to his wonderment, he heard the woman call "*Nagos!*" which means "The Little Mother."

"Ah," thought White Buffalo, "they speak Cree," and his heart throbbed with gladness, for he said: "Surely these people will be my friends; but who can be the little mother who may answer to the call?"

And he watched the door of the lodge and presently his eyes opened with delight, and he saw a maiden such as he had never seen in tents of his own people. As

the girl stepped forth at her mother's call, and assisted in moving the frame on which the great hide was

stretched, White Buffalo wondered no more as to why he had come afar into this strange land. Hitherto his

life had been taken up with the romance and also the necessity of the hunter and the trapper, and in these pursuits his ambition was intense. There was no one of

his age in the lodges of his people to compare with him as a hunter, and even his father, who was the most

renowned trapper in all that section of country, whose

medicines for beaver and lynx were noted and eagerly sought after—even this man was beginning to feel

that very soon he would have to give way to his son because of the latter's great success. Many a matron

in the gatherings of the people, having heard of the hunting and trapping renown of White Buffalo, had said

to herself: "If we could secure that young man as the

husband of our daughter, then the food supply of our lodge would be made sure." And when the scattered camps did meet as was their wont, eager eyes looked for the appearance of White Buffalo. They wanted to see who this was, and what was the style of this man, and when they beheld the stalwart youth, with his comely, kindly face, and saw him as with springy step he strolled through camp, or mounting his horse and galloping away even as part of the horse himself. Then the match-makers throughout the lodges became busy, each thinking that the other could not possibly surmise what he or she had been plotting.

However, White Buffalo and his thought had not yet turned womanward. But now a new emotion stirred his whole being. It came as in a moment. From his secret viewpoint he keenly watched this maiden. He said to himself:

"Surely she shall be mine! For this I left my southern home. For this I came all day and hunted not. Some one seemed to lead me on. I wondered why. Sometimes I thought I should stop and return to my people, and again my heart said:

"Go on, White Buffalo, go on towards the star that never moves. Go on!" And I wondered why. But I know now the reason of my coming."

And as he thought he forever watched the beautiful girl who now in the dawn of her womanhood was moving to and fro with grace and gladness before his eager eyes.



White Buffalo was struck with her name, *Nagos*. It sounded pleasant as it came from the mother's lips, but it was peculiar for the girl to be entitled "Our little mother." It seemed strange, yet nevertheless it gave pleasure to our young hero's heart. It stirred the domestic side of his nature, which is always to the front in every true man's makeup.

For a long time he looked and watched and drank in with intense pleasure these glimpses of this unknown girl. He speculated how he would approach the tent, and he wondered where the men-folk might be, and were there any others besides the real mother of the lodge and the little mother, the daughter of the camp, and already the queen in White Buffalo's heart. Presently he heard the voice of a child coming from the lodge, and saw *Nagos* with tender words on her lips rush into the tent and come forth with a child in her arms. It was exquisite pleasure to our young hunter to watch this girl as she with affection and love did caress and sing to and care for this child. No wonder they call her "the little mother." And by and by in the days that were coming he found out that this had been characteristic of this girl all through her life. She was kind to everybody. Children and animals were her pets. And it came to pass that her people and friends gave her the name *Nagos*, or "Little Mother."

In White Buffalo's eyes there lay a charm in her every movement. To him she was gloriously beautiful,

exquisite in form and radiant in feature. Thus she appeared to White Buffalo as the mate the great spirit had designed for him.

And now he heard the mother say to the daughter: "Your father is coming." And the daughter answered, "How do you know, mother? I hear him not; I see him not."

And the mother smiled and said: "Oh, my daughter, when you have lived with and loved a good man as I have lived with and loved your father for many summers and winters, you will know when he is near. Something will tell you that he is near, that even now he is approaching."

Nagos smiled to herself, as she wondered when it would be in her life such experiences would come. And then upon the scene there appeared two men, and for the moment White Buffalo's heart stood still. Then he saw that these approaching were father and son, and both fine-looking men. The elder, the wood hunter and canoe man in his prime, and the younger still in his teens and younger than our hero. Each had a pack of meat and skins on his back, and as they reached the lodge both mother and daughter sprang to help them with their loads. "Some more small deer-skins for me to dress," said Nagos.

Now that the man of the lodge had returned White Buffalo felt that it was time to make his presence known, and as he stepped from his hiding place out on to the prairie, the dogs rushed and raised a furious barking,

and both men sprang out with their weapons in their hands, the father with his flintlock, and the son with his bow and quiver. But White Buffalo raised his hand and said:

"I am one of your people. We are the same people."

Then the father welcomed him to their lodge, and White Buffalo became the guest in the camp of the northern Cree.

The evening was spent in descriptions of the country and manner of life of these distinct people, who while speaking dialects of the same language were yet strange to one another. White Buffalo learned of the great lakes and mighty rivers in the north, of the wonderful migrations of the small caribou. How these came south in the early winter, and went far north as spring approached; how their number was like sand upon the shore. He heard about the great abundance of whitefish and sturgeon. He found out by tactful questioning that his host's name was *Kewatenokao*, (the North Wind Maker). He in his turn told his hosts about the great plain, and the big semi-wood and plain country that his people roamed in. He also had seen great herds, and these were not the small deer but the big buffalo. Only once or twice he caught the eye of Nagos, but he knew she was listening to his story. He felt the thrill of her presence. It was as if he had come into a new life. This wonderful emotion which charged his whole being. And the maiden also was perfectly

conscious of her new experience. Even as it has been in all human history, and doubtless will continue while man remains on this sphere. The next day White Buffalo took his departure. He had not spoken one single word to the maiden who had unconsciously wrapped her very image about his heart. He merely thanked her father and mother for their hospitality, and they expressed the hope that White Buffalo might again visit their humble lodge, and as the father said this Nagos lifted her eyes and looked at the young man, and that look was sufficient to cheer him on his way through the forest and across the ranges of hills on his journey to his own home lodge. Indeed, he lived upon that glance for many months that were coming. As he travelled southward he said to himself:

"Now, I must prove myself. Hitherto I have been a boy. Since yesterday I feel that I have become a man. But I am not yet consecrated, neither have I gone to war against the enemies of my people. How do I know that the spirits will think me worthy of their intercourse? How do I know that my heart will stand me true in the time of serious danger?"

Thus White Buffalo soliloquised and introspected, as with light step and at times with steady trot he made his way across the country, and in the evening of the second day was received with joy by his own people who had anxiously awaited his coming and wondered what possibly could have occurred to keep him from camp so long. Shortly after this, and when his father's

lodge was placed down the Swan and in the vicinity of Thunder Hill, the night again came, and White Buffalo had not returned, and the morning and the night came and he was still absent, and again this was repeated, and his young companions sought him far and near, and his mother had worried much. But if our reader had been in that camp and observant he would have noticed that the older men manifested no extra anxiety. They merely kept silence. The young people and some women might gossip and wonder and say:

"Have our enemies destroyed him? Has he met the *Mistaya*, the great grizzly, and been slain by him?"

But no answer came from the lips of the older men, the experienced hunters and warriors, the priests and medicine men and conjurors. These kept silent, and to his mother's great joy about the middle of the fourth day White Buffalo came into camp. He looked weary and worn, but there was something in his presence that said to all his fellows: "He is changed; he has passed through the ordeal; the spirits have revealed themselves to him."

Suppose we go in thought with White Buffalo during these four days' absence. If so, we would cross the valley of the Swan, we would climb the steep slope of the Thunder Bird Hill. We would wend our way through the thick forest which in those days covered its summit. We would stay not till we stood on its highest peak, then we would watch White Buffalo, who having come thus far without food and drink and in

wrapt meditation and full of anxious wonderment, we would see him cast his eyes heavenward and his whole attitude would be that of supplication, and thus becoming weary with long standing he would at last sit down, but forever supplicating, forever waiting, constantly watching, and thus in the receptive and responsive mood, and the days and the long nights would follow one another, neither eating nor drinking. And two nights and two days have come and gone, and White Buffalo has cried out and earnestly importuned, and the evening of the third day finds him faint and alone, and during the hours of that night he falls asleep. Indeed, it is more than sleep, it is absolute unconsciousness to this present time and place, and there comes to him a spirit in answer to his cry, and he hears the words:

"My son, your prayer is heard, and I am sent to become *Kepawakan*, the spirit of your dream, and you will do thus and so when you hunt, and when you go to war, and when you seek to wed. And if you strictly observe these rules I have laid down for you, I will be your guide and helper, and should there come times in your life of great need for assistance, when of yourself you could not but fail, then I will come to your rescue."

And White Buffalo would say: "My ear is all attent, my mind will never forget, I will surely perform what you have said unto me."

Then the spirit of his dream would say unto White Buffalo: "Well, my son, you will know me when I come by my shape."

And White Buffalo did say: "And what shape will you take, the spirit of my dream?"

And the answer would come: "I will forever take the shape of a forest wolf, the *Sakowmayekun*, who always henceforth will be your friend."

And the sun of the fourth day would be high in the heavens when White Buffalo, awaking from his long tramp, would feel that his consecration was answered, and that henceforth as he lived he was under vow. And rubbing his eyes and looking around him he beheld, a little way off from where he had slept, and there stood a great timber wolf, and White Buffalo looked into the eye of the wolf, and the wolf looked into his eye, and there was mutual understanding, and the man and the wolf were without fear. And as White Buffalo turned to come down the hill, behold, the wolf came also, and thus they travelled down the steep slope and across the luxuriant valley. In silence both tramped, and not until the lodges of the man's people were in sight did the wolf disappear. And White Buffalo stood and looked long in the direction the wolf had gone. Then he turned and came into the camp.

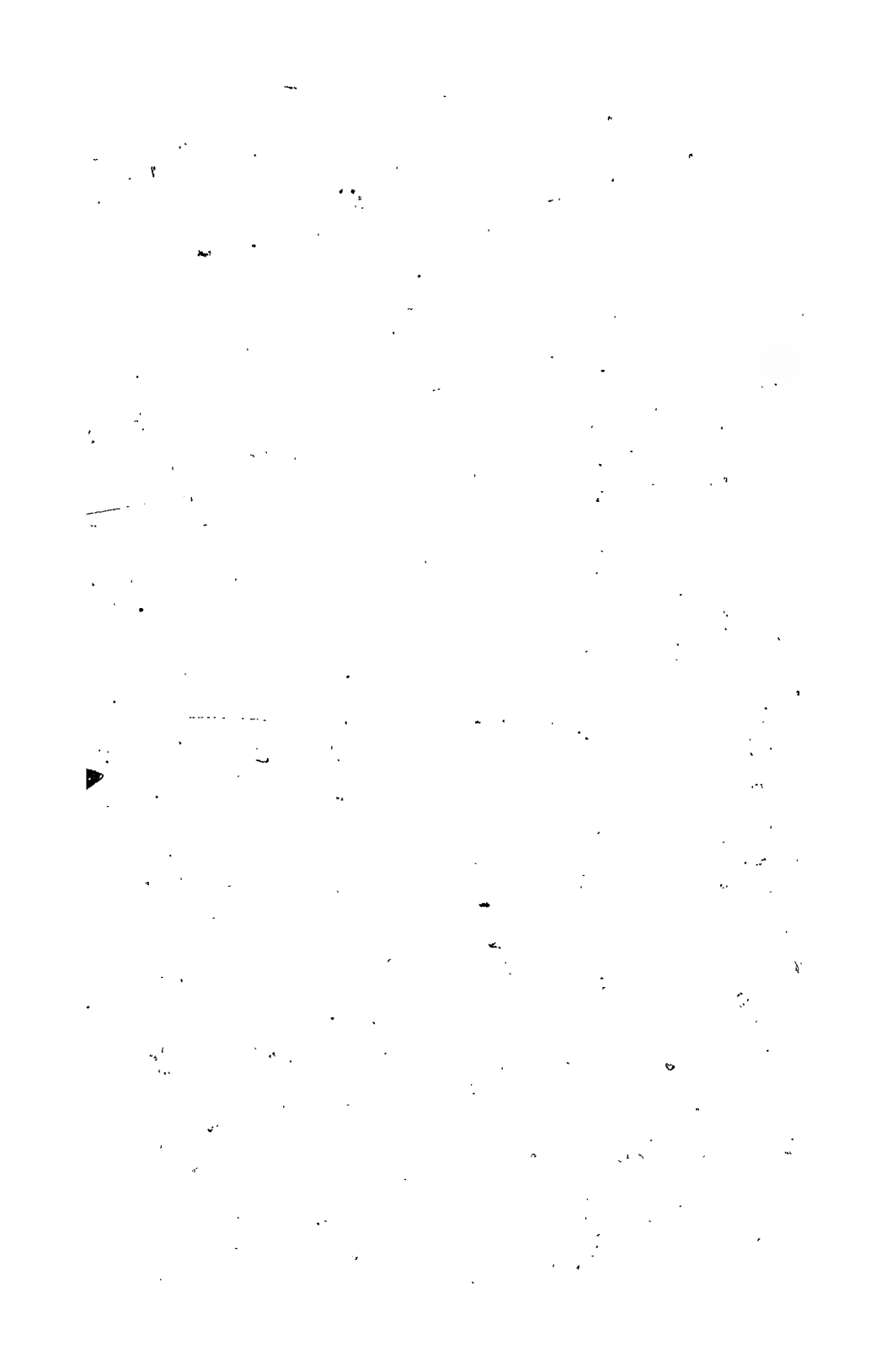
Oh, the joy of that mother's heart! Her boy was home again, and his father coming from the hunt that evening saw and was abundantly gratified to recognize by the lad's appearance that his son had gone and conquered and come back a victor. From that day on never more did White Buffalo set a trap for a wolf or speed an arrow or a bullet after one of the kind. Moreover, it was noted by the people of the camp that no matter whose meat cache was destroyed by wolves, those of White Buffalo were never molested.

In this way our hero passed one testing of himself.



*White Buffalo and His Pawakun*





## CHAPTER V.

*He Joins His First War Party.*

**N**OT LONG AFTER there came the opportunity for the second. The camp had scattered, and again had convened, but some were missing, and one day a lone woman came in wailing and weeping, and in full mourning costume. Her story was sad. She alone of the lodges she represented had escaped to tell her people. The Blackfeet had come upon them in great numbers, and all were dead. The enemy had taken every scalp, and all their horses and everything, from her people. She had been away from camp when she heard the war-whoop, and she hid and when all was quiet she scouted to the camp and found what she had feared. Her friends were slain, alas! alas! and who will avenge their death? Yes, who will avenge their death?

And White Buffalo heard the cry, and though of mild nature and instinctively a man of peace, his heart was stirred, and his blood boiled within him, and he said to himself: "Perhaps this is my opportunity, per-

haps this is to be the time of my second testing." And if there had been any hesitation in his mind about joining the war party, hearing Snake Skin say in a flippant way: "Oh, yes; every man that can be spared will go, and White Buffalo will keep the camp. He has no heart for war!"

And White Buffalo bit his lip and said to himself: "Hold on, Snake Skin, do not be too sure. However, I as yet do not know myself, and therefore I will not boast."

This woman who had arrived in the camp as the sole survivor of quite a number of lodges of her people, which had been rushed by a war party of Blackfeet while the Crees were camped in the valley of the Chain of Lakes River, had come a long way alone, and her story of death, and her wailings through between the lodges so stirred the hearts of the warriors that an expedition for the purpose of revenge was organized. And in every lodge preparations went quickly forward, for the season was now well advanced, and it was necessary that the warriors should be back from crossing the great plains before the winter would strongly set in.

The baggage and equipment and commissariat of an Indian camp on the war path did not take long to prepare. A good bow with a quiver full of shod arrows, a lariat, either a chewed line or one plaited out of woven buffalo hair, a few pairs of moccasins, possibly a shoe needle and an awl, a scalping knife, a light fall robe, and the warrior's equipment was complete. If he

was the fortunate owner of a flintlock gun, and had a powder horn full of powder, and thirty or forty trade balls, then these took the place of the bow and quiver, and thus on foot and in parties ranging from one to several hundred, these people were accustomed to take to the war path.

On the third day from the arrival of the lone woman, a party numbering between fifty and sixty left this camp and started westward. *Opapamotao*, the traveller, led the party. This man's name was truly significant of his life. He had seen the great mountains. He had crossed the divide over into the Peigan country, now known as the Missouri. He had scouted up to the lodges of the Sioux. He had fought Blackfeet and Bloods on the big tributaries of the great Saskatchewan. He had, on the other hand, accompanied the Hudson's Bay trader down to the shores of the *Kechegame*—the sea. He alone of all his people had brought a gun and a blanket and a fathom of cloth from the depot post Fort York on the shores of the Hudson's Bay. He was the adventurous spirit. One hundred years ago there were but few of his kind that had travelled as far in the great northwest in America. *Opapamotao*, because of his knowledge of the country, became the leader of this war expedition. Singing a war song he issued from his lodge, and without even a look back as his wife and children wept, he strode forth, and immediately his song was taken up by all who had waited for the

signal, and thus these men, without food, with simple armor, and very little of that, set out to avenge the death of their people on their enemies.

As was natural and logical, the first part of their journey took them directly to the spot the woman had described as the scene of the massacre. The third day out they approached the place. Up to this time they had lived on rabbits and duck and chicken, rather precarious commissariat. They had killed one elk and two small deer, and hastily around the camp fire at night some of them more provident than the rest, had cut up pieces of the meat of these animals, and, improvising staging made of poles, and placing these leeward of the camp fire, they had thus dried the meat, and repeatedly turning it, by the morning of the next day had it very much lightened and ready to carry with them.

Now they approach the spot indicated by the woman as the scene of slaughter. Sure enough, away down the valley some of the lodges were still standing. Other than this, there was no sign of humanity. As they came nearer, wolves and coyotes and myriad carrion birds were direct evidence of the truth of the woman's tale. Reaching the spot, alas, it was too true. Here are the bones and mutilated remains of their friends and relatives. *Opapamotao* sent a scout up the hill the way they would travel, and left another on the hill from whence they had come. Then himself and the rest of his company began a silent and minute inspection of the massacre. After reading into the horrible scene before

them the many tragedies therein written, the mother and the infant child, the husband and wife, the little grandchild and the aged grandparent, all dead, and horribly dead, and these were their friends beloved, the people with whom they had been bred, and for whose return a few days ago they had been looking with joyful anticipation. And thus thinking and in silence they set them down, and after a long time they sang the death song, and strong men wept. And in the psychological moment *Opapamotao*, who was experienced in humanity, arose, and in eloquence, and with effect, wrought upon his little audience until every man jumped to his feet singing. And now with vengeance in the song they stepped simultaneously as with one movement on the trail of the enemy.

We believe we are safe in saying that there were no better trailers than the Indians of the North American continent one hundred years ago. They were born to it. They inherited this faculty. Out of centuries it had come almost as a distinct sense into the life of this people. Observation was the catechism of their childhood. One of their philosophers did say:

"Never ask a question concerning that which you can find out for yourself. Open your eyes, quicken your mind. Think and know."

Therefore these people were observant, and intensely perceptive. In a twinkling they would have a correct understanding of the case, while the man in other lands, because of his own school of environment,

would take long periods of time to perceive what was the matter. Therefore, within his limit, every man in this little company of sixty men was an army in himself. *Opapamotao* knew this, but he also knew that he had better knowledge of the country than any man with him. In this he was the chosen leader. It was not necessary for him to give a signal or to shout a command to his scouts on the rear or in the advance. They knew what to do and did it.

The trail was now more than ten days old. Rain had fallen, winds had blown, the sun had shone, but without doubt the trail was kept. There had been quite a few horses in the camp that had been destroyed. All these were taken by the victors.

Our war party followed up the valley of what is today the Qu'Appelle. Then they struck across to the south branch of the Saskatchewan and followed it up on the south side. Here they met some of the great herds which had come in behind the enemy in the intervening time. Now they feasted, and also became more careful in their scouting. All this was fresh and entirely new as an experience in the life of our hero. It is one thing to sit beside the camp fire or astride your horse as you ride side by side with heroes from many battles and listen to their experience. It is another thing to be out on the trail after your enemies, to have burning in your breast the lust for blood, the omnipresent and intense desire for vengeance, to picture the massacre and its horrible details. To think of men and

women you have respected and the companions of your youth, and the terrible death they died at the hands of the enemy." And all this and much more was in White Buffalo's thought by day and by night, for he never forgot that this was his testing time. When he thought of this, he also always thought of the young maiden, of the Little Mother, *Nagos*, away down in the northland beside the great waters in the camp of the North Wind Maker. She was never absent from his heart and thought. He questioned would he find himself at the front, the true man, brave and strong, worthy to be the mate of such a girl as he had found, when the north wind called him, and he had gone in answer on the quest? As yet, as with every man, White Buffalo in the dawn of his strong manhood was a problem to himself. When off duty and mingling with the crowd of warriors, and listening to their talk, and often hearing the braggart-boast, and sometimes noticing a covert sneer which would fall from the lips of young fellows like Snake Skin and his kind, and which seemed to say: "And what about this baby man, who never left his mother far until now? What can he do? Why, we can see him run when the first war whoop sounds."

And White Buffalo did not make answer, for as yet he did not know.

Steady westward, up the valley of the south branch the trail led. Buffalo everywhere, but humanity nowhere. This was the great lone land. The manner of travel with this war party was as follows: A few ex-



perienced men, with as many more fresh recruits, young men like White Buffalo, were sent on in advance, and out on to the flanks of the party. These would go out in turn day by day, and fall back upon the main party in the evening, unless some sign or surprise drove them in earlier in the day. It was on one of these advance expeditions that White Buffalo, being away alone, suddenly encountered a big grizzly. He had a fine opportunity of taking stock of this monster. The brute was coming slowly up a coulée and the wind was favorable for our scout, and he leisurely watched the great animal as the bear followed a buffalo trail up the valley. He saw his immense claws, and said to himself:

"What a fine trophy these would make!"

He had heard terrible tales of the grizzly's ferocity, and he questioned the wisdom of tackling the bear. Then again he longed for those claws. He felt it would be something to do to kill one of these far-famed *Mistayas*—great ones. His strong desire to try his skill on the bear overcame his prudence, and he crept near where the big fellow must pass, and selecting a couple of his best arrows, and testing his bow, he crawled nearer still. and when the bear was opposite to him he pulled and let his arrow fly, and greatly to his joy he saw it go through the hide and flesh right into the very vitals of his prey. He knew that his shot was fatal, but he had heard so much about the toughness and tenacity to life of these strange big animals, and how when they seemed as dead yet nevertheless they would resurrect and kill

their man or men. So with great care he watched the bear, who, taken by surprise, peered around for whence the shot had come, and looked so big and fierce that our hero's heart all but failed him. Yet all the same he strung another arrow, and as the bear was standing, looking for his enemy, he pulled his bow, and again into vital places went his unerring shot, and the big bear with a growl and a whine did bite at the protruding arrows, and sought to pull them out, but all the while was dying fast, and presently fell over. White Buffalo saw with a hunter's gladness that his first encounter with a monster grizzly was a complete victory for himself, and running up the hill to watch for the nearest scout, he signalled to him, who in turn sent the signal to another, and in the meanwhile hurried over to White Buffalo, and very soon there were a number of his companions who stood and looked their astonishment at his skill and pluck. They saw the dead monster; they saw the two arrows with only the feathered parts sticking out from the huge body, which was now stretched in death. Without White Buffalo telling them they saw the spot from whence he had sent those fatal arrows. They looked at this young lad and said to themselves, even as they had said in the camp before:

"This is no common man. His arm is strong. His eye is quick. His heart is brave."

And at once away up in their estimation they placed White Buffalo. The bear was very fat, and soon they had skinned him, and White Buffalo had the feet strung

together, to be carefully skinned when in camp, where he could stretch the skins and dry them with the claws thereon. For if he should live to return from this expedition, these great claws would grace his father's lodge, and his mother would say:

"Oh, my son killed the first one of these great beasts that he ever saw."

That night in the war party camp Snake Skin tried once more to turn the tide, while the bear meat and the buffalo meat were sizzling on the roasting sticks around the fire, and lips and throat were oilier than they had been for many days.

"Oh," said Snake Skin. "You know White Buffalo found this bear asleep today, and he killed him as he slept. Poor bear, not to know what killed him!"

But there was no laugh in response to this. White Buffalo's stock had gone up. It was no small thing for a tenderling warrior with only bow and quiver and small hunting knife to tackle one of these big grizzlies, even if he was asleep. Many a man with a good gun had met his death in such an encounter as this.

On up the river, steadily towards the setting sun, travelled our party. They had passed the Swift Current Creek. They had come up opposite the mouth of the *Wawaskesew*, now called the Red Deer, and not till then did they find fresh traces of their enemies, and the trail still went westward, and they hurried on after it. And again it was White Buffalo's fate to be far on the lead and alone. Carefully scouting as he went, for

these Indians knew that the enemies would leave some of their scouts far in the rear, especially as but now some of their warriors had come home triumphant with scalps and spoils and horses from the land of their foes.

Suddenly White Buffalo, with his keen eye, saw away in the distance on the summit of a hill which covered the country to the rear of the camp the trail of which they were following, what he seemed instinctively to know was the outstretched body of a man. From his vantage ground he felt pretty sure that he had not been seen, so carefully had he came, so wisely had he chosen the course of his approach, and now he said to himself:

"Let me see how close I can go without this man feeling my presence." White Buffalo knew that the camp to which this man belonged could not be very far away, and he also thought:

"If I can kill this scout and he does not return to camp tonight, it will be late in the night or perhaps tomorrow before our enemies will have any tidings of our vicinity."

In the meanwhile White Buffalo was conscious that a strange feeling was coming into his being, such as he had never known, that surely the lust of blood was now stirring his veins and coursing through his heart. And he, remembering the lone woman's wail, and the fearful sight of yonder camp, to which himself and party had come, had but one desire.

"Let me but near to yonder man, and if he is awake it will be which is the quicker, which is the stronger, and if he is asleep then perhaps he will awake no more."

Thus White Buffalo communed with himself, and all the while studied the country between him and the outstretched man, its undulations, its small ravines, its general topography, even the dust pan hollows and buffalo trails, the work of countless herds throughout the ages, were keenly and closely taken stock of by this young hunter-warrior, who started in this life with the generations of such work behind him, and whose life thus far in the making of the scout had been full of magnificent opportunity, watching everything possible to human vision, forever watching the outstretched form that seemed as part of the hilltop. This speck upon the summit, but which White Buffalo, as if by instinct, knew was not the hill, but a man on the hill. Slowly, carefully, persistently he crept nearer. By and by he said to himself:

"That poor fellow is asleep. How foolish for any man when on duty to go asleep!" This thought seemed to comfort him. This man deserved to die. He had abused his trust. "Even his own people should demand his death. How much more I who am here to avenge the death of so many of my people."

Thus White Buffalo, who had somewhat hesitated, began to encourage himself in the work of death he was about to perform. Closer he crawled, and looked and

watched and listened, and now he saw the movement of the man's body as he breathed. A little closer and he heard his breathing. With bow strung and arrow in his left hand, and with his scalping knife in his right, silently he approached his victim. The man was stretched with his face down on the ground. He also had his bow and arrow in his hand, and his knife lay there beside him. All this White Buffalo took in at a glance, barely breathing, and now full of strong desire to overcome, to kill, thirsting for this, his first opportunity at the foe of his people. He raised his arm, and sent the knife right through the sleeping man's heart. The Blackfoot hardly stirred, he merely looked and saw his enemy and died.

And White Buffalo, knowing that this man was there alone, and it mattered not if he stood up and stretched himself, for if he should be seen he would be thought to be the scout the camp had left to watch its rear. Thus he stood and looked ahead, and away in the distance he saw the camp. Then he took the man's bow and quiver and knife, and for the first time in his life he scalped his foe, and throwing the dead man's bow and quiver over his shoulder and sticking the scalp lock in his belt he went slowly down the hill towards whence he had come. When he met his party, they saw at once what he had done. He told them that the camp of their enemy was in sight from yonder hill. He said that if the Blackfeet depended on this man, whom he had

slain, to watch the trail for them, they would not know that we are near, unless it will be that spirits speak and carry tidings on.

In silence his friends heard. They looked at White Buffalo, and again they said to themselves:

"He is not like other men. Perhaps before we return from this trip, instead of being the youngest in the party, he will have already become our leader and our chief."

*Papamotao*, the great traveller, as he came up and saw what White Buffalo had done, said:

"Well, what do you think? How should we approach this camp?"

And White Buffalo modestly said; "It is not for me to speak. I am yet young. I never did charge the lodges of our enemies."

But *Papamotao* answered: "Never mind your youth, speak up and tell us what you think."

Thus being urged, White Buffalo said: "Let your best scouts approach the camp as near as they can, count the lodges, make sure of the position of the camp. Then if we find the number of our enemies very large, it would be foolish for us, who are but a few, to charge it. We should then be content with taking as many of their horses as possible, and killing any of their stragglers we may find. But should our scouts in counting the lodges find out that the camp is not large, then I would say let us make ready and in the break of the

dawn of tomorrow morning let us rush the camp, and perhaps we can do even unto them as they have done to our people."

*Papamotao* answered: "Your words are wise, and as you advise, so will we do."

To all this Snake Skin listened, and his heart grew cold, and his mind became full of envy, but he saw that at this time he could not do anything. *Papamotao* selected four of his best scouts, and appointed a rendezvous, and carefully instructing them, he sent them away, and strictly enjoined them if living to be back at the rendezvous shortly after dark that night. Away went the scouts, and soon were lost to all human view, having with wonderful deftness covered themselves with the topography of the land around them. Then in solemn silence and under cover, the whole party moved to the appointed place of meeting. Every heart was beating with excitement, and even the old warriors felt the thrill of nearness to their enemy. Reaching the spot, they spent the rest of the day in looking to their weapons, in testing their bows and bow strings, in carefully overhauling their quivers, straightening their arrows, keenly inspecting the wrappings of the shods and feathers, sharpening their knives, unwinding and taking away every kink out of their lariats and horse lines, which they had packed all the way from yonder distant camp in the land of their own people. These lines they carefully re-coiled to avoid anything like a tangle when they might need them in a hurry. Thus the day waned,



and the night dropped, and darkness covered the land, and they sat and listened, and presently there came on the still air the bark of a coyote.

"Ha!" said *Opapamotao*, "there is one of our scouts. Answer him, Snake Skin." And Snake Skin gave a bark and a whoop, and again there came a bark and a whoop, even as a coyote does. And soon there was heard the coyote's cry near by, and Snake Skin barked once more.

"That will do," said *Opapamatao*, and in a few minutes quietly and stealthily there came among them one of the scouts. His story was soon told.

"They are not many. I counted thirty lodges. I believe that some if not all of the slayers of our people are in this camp. Fresh scalps were hanging on the poles."

Soon a wolf howled, and *Opapamotao* howled also, and in a little while in came the second scout, and told his story.

"They are few, and their camp is easy. We are sufficient to rush them. That is what I think."

Just then an owl hooted, and *Opapamotao* answered back an owl cry to an owl cry, and a third scout came in out of the darkness, and he said:

"A small camp, a few people, only three times ten did I count as the number of their lodges."

Then a coyote bark was heard and responded to by Snake Skin, and the fourth scout was in their midst, and his story was the same. And as none of these four

men had any communication with his fellows since they separated during the day, and as each and every one in fact and story corroborated the other, the whole party felt they knew the truth, and in a quiet clear voice *Opapamotao* spoke as follows:

"We will do even as White Buffalo proposed today. You have seen the camp, and you have told us how it is situated. We will divide our company, and half will go with me, and the other half will follow White Buffalo."

And as White Buffalo was about to protest all did respond: "Yes, yes! Let White Buffalo lead half of our company!"

So he, embarrassed, and feeling his unfitness, had to consent to take the place given to him.

"And now, young men," said *Opapamotao*, "it is still early, and the night is long. We will rest, and at midnight move up close. Then each party will take its place."

And so they did. And it was midnight, and in quiet they moved near to the camp of their enemy, and they divided their little company, and appointed the place where White Buffalo had come to them the day before as their rendezvous and waiting spot, should they become separated in the struggle. Then each party went to its allotted place.

Have you stood guard all night during the late autumn of the year? Have you as with telepathic sense felt the nearness of your enemies, and waited with keen

expectancy for the struggle that was coming? If so, you have felt even as these men did feel as they waited for the faint glimmer of the coming dawn. But our war party felt more than this. Were they not here on a specific purpose? Had they not left their homes and their people, commissioned by their history and by all their traditions, and by what they had heard and seen themselves to avenge the massacre of their friends? From the viewpoint of these men, it was as if the master spirit had sent them forth. Thus their hearts were stirred.

White Buffalo, as he sat apart from the little company, who had of their own volition and unanimous selection made him their chief pro tem, felt that in some way he was discovering himself. He recognized that he could face danger and death and brave it out. His encounter with the grizzly had helped him a great deal. His consciousness of himself as he had the day before approached the sleeping scout, had made him to know that he could risk and dare. So now he did not fear for himself, but this new position of suddenly becoming leader he felt the weight of intensely. This he had not bargained for. When he left his father's lodge, 'twas as if the words were thrown after him: "Watch, listen, learn and do."

But here he found himself placed in command, and this perplexed him and he was worried. Just then there came up and sat down beside him one of the oldest men in his company, who said to him:

"My son, let not your youth trouble you this morning. Let your mind have free way. Then tell us what to do and we will obey you as we can. My son, think upon the spirit of your dream. If you are in doubt let your prayer go out to him. Be strong, my son; I will not say be brave, for now we know that you are brave. I will say, be wise, my son."

These words whispered in his ear greatly comforted White Buffalo, and presently he spake as his little following gathered around:

"We will spread out two by two, and circle our side of the camp. I will be in the centre of the circle. With the first peep of the dawn we will approach as close as we can without being seen, and then when it is light enough I will give the signal and we will rush upon the camp. Remember we are here to take vengeance upon our enemies. Let every man's heart be true. If we are not killed, then having done our part let us not forget the place of gathering."

Then each one took his place, and all was quiet. The wolf howled, the coyote barked, the dogs in the camp howled also. Occasionally the wolf howled and another answered. These were the signals. Across the camp through the night and darkness there went the cry of the wolf and the shrill call of the coyote, and in intervals the hoot of the owl. And now and then a horse neighed. Scouts of the camp were moving to and fro. Silently, they on their part were watching and listening for an enemy. They did not expect one on

the back trail, for they had left, as they thought, a good man to take care of that. Others had come in. He had not come, but of this they were not anxious. Indeed, the fact that he had not come made them feel the more secure. They little knew that their scout was stiff in death. Nevertheless, they keenly watched. Oh, the long, weary night, when the dawn seems as if it is never coming, and the watcher's eyes are heavy, and he longs for a time when he will be relieved and take his rest for a little while ere the camp is all astir and possibly on the march again!

White Buffalo's thoughts are mixed. Here he is on his avenging mission. Here is the enemy before him. Suddenly he had been thrust into prominence among his fellows. He feels a responsibility. This was his first war venture. All these things came and went through his mind, but amid them all, omnipresent through them all, he thought of Nagos. He saw her flitting in and out and around that lone lodge in the far northern wilderness. He wondered where she was now, and what she might be doing. Was she thinking of him, even as he was of her? And away across the miles and over the great expanse of country and up through the long valley of the Saskatchewan there seemed to come the answer:

"Yes, I am thinking of you."

And it made him thrill through his being, and it nerved his full resolve: "For her sake, for the sake of the Little Mother, I will be brave. I will do my

best this morning. I will lead these men in the onslaught, for Nāgos, for my own manhood, for revenge. I will fight and kill, and, if I can, conquer today."

Thus he sat and mused and resolved. And now it was near morning and the coyotes from all the hills and lands in the vicinity sent up their morning hallelujah chorus. Darkness was thick as yet, but soon the day glimmer would appear, and under cover of the general noise the warriors signalled to each other, and drew nearer, each party converging in its place upon the camp, every man tense, every man grasping his weapons, every man nerving himself for the charge that was near. Suddenly, as if a telepathic message had come to *Opapamotao* from White Buffalo across the camp, and the answer had been returned and the words "Are you ready?" were answered "Yes, give the signal," and almost simultaneously there came from the throats of the two leaders the war-whoop signal to charge, and from the throats of all their following came the exultant response, and the camp was startled from its dreams, and in the first flush of the sudden rush most of the scouts were killed and scalped as in a twinkling, and on to the lodges rushed the invading host. The battle was short. A few escaped in the darkness to the bank of the creek, where they made a stand, and the natural position was to them as a stronghold. The wounded and maimed, and those who had escaped free were there suddenly brought together. And while their enemies were devastating their camp, these had time to gather

their wits, and with all energy helped nature in creating a barricade. Fully half of the camp fell victims to the fierce charge of these men who had come all this way to take revenge, and also in answer to their thirst for the glory and spoils of war. They took no prisoners, they slaughtered all that fell into their hands. They scalped those whose scalp locks were worth taking. They gathered up the horses, and to White Buffalo's great satisfaction, found among these the most of those which belonged to the Cree camp, and this fact clearly indicated that their vengeance had fallen on the right party. To White Buffalo's mind this was most satisfactory, for as we have seen, he had his own sense of justice. Yesterday he felt that the scout whom he killed deserved death, inasmuch as he had found him sleeping at his post. Today he finds the slayers and robbers with the goods on them. Horses and saddles and equipment are in this camp. Therefore this is but the meting out of common justice. Thus this young warrior-hunter reasons, and his conscience is satisfied. He is not a savage any more than other men are savage.

In the meantime *Opapamotao* and White Buffalo confer together. Near by are the rest of these camp of people. These have recovered from their fright. They are now, in comparison with the weapons of their enemies, well fortified.

"Shall we charge these people or not?" Taking stock of their loss, they found it had been very small. The enemy was so much taken by surprise that the vic-

tory had been theirs without much loss to themselves. *Opapamotao* very well knew that if they charged the stronghold of the remnant, in all probability there would be quite a number of dead in their party. However, of this he, for the moment, did not say anything. He was waiting for what this young man, this new leader, might suggest. And patiently he waited. White Buffalo at length spoke:—

“Why should we seek to kill further? Already we have more than avenged the death of our people. Already we have gathered more horses and material, far more, than they took from the camp of our friends. We should be satisfied. As for myself, my heart is sick with so much killing. I would say, leave these people alone. Let us gather up our spoil and return.”

*Opapamotao* was glad that White Buffalo did thus speak. It relieved him very much. He quickly responded: “Your words are wise, my son, and I am with you in what you have said.”

And there was not a man in the company to protest. White Buffalo had done most valiantly. He had fairly borne down the strongest of his enemies. His belt was full of scalps, and they were not the scalps of women and children. Therefore his words had weight. It was not that he was afraid that he had thus spoken. All men knew that. Snake Skin was saying to himself:

“Nevermore shall the word of derision or disrespect pass my lips against White Buffalo.” For he well remembered that only a little while since that morning



when a monster Blackfoot had him down and was about to brain him with his war club, it was White Buffalo's strong grip that caught the uplifted arm and struck in his turn a death blow to his enemy. And thus Snake Skin knew he owed his life to the man whom he would fain have hated, and had so often scorned.

Hurriedly our party made ready for the return, rounding up the horses, packing up as much of the spoil of the camp as they thought fit, and selecting two or three of the largest of the Blackfoot lodges, for winter was near, and they might need this shelter before reaching home. They packed all the stuff on some ponies, and leisurely began their homeward journey, of course all the while carefully guarding their rear. Every scout that was left to watch the back trail kept in mind what had happened to the Blackfoot scout the other day, and said to himself:

"Ah, that was White Buffalo's quick thought and brave act which let us into the camp without our enemies feeling our coming." And thus stimulated, he worked well nor ever slept at his post.

As we said before, our party had discovered some of the horses belonging to their friends. These animals had been rushed from yonder camp in the valley of the Chain of Lakes River, and across the long distance to the Blackfoot camp, and now within a short time, being re-captured, were not fit for rapid travel. Therefore the homeward journey must be made if possible with care for the well-being and safe return to their own

home camp of all this stock. Among the horses of the Blackfeet were some fine animals, one in particular which Snake Skin had taken, a magnificent red roan. And the Crees at once gave the name to this horse of *Moosobewyh*, Moose Hair. And when the party came to buffalo, Snake Skin came up and said to his old enemy, but now his most admired friend: "White Buffalo, come run this horse, and see what there is in him."

And White Buffalo had quickly shot a couple of fine cows from Moose Hair's back, and came in with the gratifying report that this horse was a splendid buffalo runner, and Snake Skin was proud, and the whole party felt glad, for now the camp to which they belonged could claim that they had two first-class horses in it. Blackfoot, the original Blackfoot, than whom there was no better, and they were taking home another famous horse, Moose Hair.

It was in these days a source of great pride to the people of a large area of country, a people who during periods of the year scattered far and wide, yet held allegiance to one another, these distinct camps coming together occasionally and forming one large camp, and if it should come to pass that in the aggregation some one had a phenomenal horse, the whole big camp took a share in the pride of ownership.

Thus, our war party was exultant. It did not signify which was the best horse, Blackfoot or Moose Hair, nevertheless their camp would be the possessor of both horses, and already they felt large prospective

interest in the meeting with some other big camp, and then taking part in some great races which must inevitably come to pass.

Steadily eastward our warriors made their journey, nursing the poorest horse in the party, gauging their day's travel by his strength and condition. Sometimes they moved all night across the plain making distance in length of time rather than rushing, which is the only way to bring one's stock in in good shape. There was no trouble about provisions, day after day they travelled through buffalo. The great herd was making its northern migration and tens of thousands of these wild cattle were crossing the south branch and going north every few hours.

White Buffalo, not satisfied with buffalo meat alone as a constant bill of fare, killed several deer and some antelope, and before they left the south branch to strike across to the Chain of Lakes River, he killed some fine black bear. The skins of these were in splendid condition for domestic use and for the adornment of the hunter's lodge, also for the trappings of a horse, and in camp at night he stretched, and with the help of his companions he cleaned and dried these bear skins. Already the beginnings of winter were upon them. The *Penaskowepesim*, the falling leaf moon, had gone, and the beginning of the winter moon was now shining, and the nights were cold when our party, having left the Chain of Lakes valley and gone on into that wonderful park region between the Chain of Lakes River and the

Beaver, travelled along eastward and north, and all the while were growing in their intense longing for home, and wondering where they would find the camp. One evening White Buffalo came in and told them that he thought that by tomorrow night they would reach home. He said:

"I found fresh tracks this evening, and unless I am very much mistaken they are the tracks of the people of our camp. I found where they had killed some elk, and had gone back and again come with horses, and returned with the meat, and I expect we will find our friends tomorrow."

This was welcome news to everybody. They had gone out and accomplished, and were nearing home victorious. They had plenty of evidence of their accomplishment with them, scalps and weapons of war, and horses and saddles, and the lodges of their enemies. All these they had with them. More than this, they had the conscious exultant thought of having done their people's bidding. Blood had cried out for blood, even as in all human history this had been the case, and the people had said: "Go forth and avenge for us in the blood of our enemies, their shedding of our blood."

Today we deprecate such actions, in theory, we say it is wrong, so did White Buffalo in heart. Even then he felt that all this was wrong. Nevertheless you and I, my gentle reader, being thus tested, might even now go and do likewise.

When the sun had reached the meridian the next day our travellers were met by one of their advance scouts who had run away on in the early morning, and who had quadrupled the journey of his companions by this fast running, and who told them as they gathered up on the prairie knoll where he met them:

"I have seen the lodges of our people; we will reach them tonight," and listening to this good news they sat them down on the hill and as with one impulse sang a song of gratitude. Then they arranged the order of their coming. *Opapamotao* spoke:

"Now we know where our people are we can approach them unseen, and not until our song of victory is sounding in the centre of the camp will they see us. We will go on until the afternoon of the day is half spent. Then we will stop and array ourselves in the garbs of our own making and also those of our enemies. It will be for you, my companions and young men, to say who shall lead."

Other scouts came in corroborating the good news of their camp's vicinity. Soon the whole party had assembled with the exception of two or three whose duty it was to safeguard the trail. About the middle of the afternoon *Opapamotao* signalled these to come in also, and very soon the whole party came to a full stop, and *Opapamotao* gave the order to make ready and to be quick about it, "so that ere the sun goes down we will have entered the lodges of our people." Just then Snake Skin spoke up and said:

"*Opapamotao* and White Buffalo will lead our entry. They will ride the two best horses we have brought. My friend and brother, White Buffalo, shall ride Moose Hair, then will come some young men carrying on poles the scalps of our enemies. The rest of us will fall in behind according to rank and age. Say, men, does this arrangement suit your will?"

And there came unanimous consent to Snake Skin's programme. Very soon with the little mirrors and the small paint bags our warriors were busy making up. If one had been present and looked upon this party a little while ago in their dishabille one would hardly think it possible that in so short a time so marvellous a transformation as now was seen could have taken place. Here they are in all the paraphernalia and gorgeousness of the aboriginal man on the upland portions of the North American continent in the early years of the nineteenth century. All being ready, each took his place, and quietly and under cover they approach the lodges, and a little while before the sun went down, they came to the camp. Then *Opapamotao* sounded the first note of the victory song, and the whole band took up the hymn and in a moment the camp had heard and conflicting emotions filled every mind. "Our warriors are coming, are they all here, who have been left, never to return? Shall we see our loved ones?" Thus fathers, mothers, wives, sisters, sweethearts, questioned. Joy and sorrow mingled in their thought. "Nevertheless, they are singing the victory song. Let us hope and be glad."

White Buffalo's mother, mending her husband's moccasins, and sitting in her place in the lodge, had been thinking of her boy, her much-loved son, when upon her ear there came the exultant strains, now nearer, the clear sounds approach. Her ear, attuned to the faintest noise, soon caught the tones of her son's voice, and in gladness she thanked the Great Spirit and all the spirits for his return, and dropping her work she sprang out of the lodge and lifted her voice in tune with the victor's song. Then every mother in the camp and every daughter and all the people took up the song and thus in loud and triumphant strain all did sing, and as they sang our war party filed in between the lodges. Who are these on the lead—and the fond mother saw her boy side by side with *Opapamotao*, the great traveller. See, he looks whole and strong, that was the first thought. Then behold where he rides, at the head of the column, side by side with the leader. Surely he must have done gloriously to be so honored. And her heart filled with pride as any mother's heart would. The son of her womb had gone forth on his first war expedition, and had come home with glory.

There was great rejoicing in that camp that night and the chief had it announced that on the morrow there would take place a great feast and a big dance in celebration of the victory achieved by his warriors. Early the next day preparations were in force, and several of the larger lodges in association with the Blackfoot lodges which our party had brought home,

were made into a great pavilion, and when finished this pavilion was consecrated by religious rite and ceremony. This ritual being performed by the priests and conjurors of the camp. Soon after midday found our war party seated in the place of honor, and all the head men and fathers were there likewise, and the women and children were gathered and the provisions were brought in. Some kinds were always ready, such as pemmican and dried meat and pounded meat and marrow-fat. These, unless the days of famine came, were forever ready, and all partook in gladness. The feast being over, the chief arose and spoke:

"My people, this is a bright day for us. This autumn while the leaves were still on the trees, our hearts were made very sad, our tears were made to flow, our lives were made miserable because of the slaughter of our friends. We mourned their death, it is true we are mourning still. Even on this glad day there are many sad hearts in our lodges. It became our duty to avenge the death of our people. *Opapamotaō* and some of the choicest of our warriors and young men went forth to perform this work for us, to take away from the history of our people that which would have been a stain upon it. Yesterday our brave men returned. The many scalps they brought, the horses, the goods of our enemies they brought with them, all speak in loud voice and say, 'Vengeance has been accomplished, our honor as a people is made sure.' For this we are thankful and because of the



safe return of the most of our young men we are grateful. We sorrow from our hearts with those whose friends came not back, but today it is for us to rejoice and to raise the song of praise. Let the drums beat, let the warriors sing, let everyone take part, let every heart be glad," and his words ending, the drums rattled, and the warriors led the people in the anthem of thanksgiving. Vengeance accomplished, lives spared, safe home again in the lodges of their people. Thus the leaders improvised and led in song and all the camp took up the refrain, and again the chief held up his hand, and the silence was profound:

"And now *Opapamotao* will tell us the story of their adventure," and *Opapamotao* in turn stood up and related the events of their expedition. He gave a graphic and terrible account of the scene of the slaughtered camp. He told how White Buffalo had killed the grizzly. He told how White Buffalo had taken the life of the rear guard of the Blackfoot camp. He pointed to the scalp lock of one that was caught sleeping at his post. He told them how he was constrained to take our hero into his council. He told them how he further was made to feel that it would be wise for him, *Papamotao*, the man of many adventures, who had travelled farther than most of his people, how he felt it was prudent for him to make White Buffalo full partner in the command of this expedition. He gave a graphic description of the charge on the camp. He wove in the incidents of battle. He told of the valor and prowess

of the new warrior, White Buffalo. He told of the council that he had with him as to the continuance of the fight, when that a portion of the Blackfeet had secured shelter. He gave credit to all that deserved it for careful scouting and prompt obedience. Then he wound up with a wonderful eulogy of the new leader, he, *Papamotao*, had discovered, "For," said he, "White Buffalo will surely henceforth be the war chief of our people." And the drums beat, and the song of victory rang out, and again the Chief held up his hand, and this time he said:

"Before the dance begins, there is one of our young men, who asks the favor to be permitted to speak a word in the ears of the people." Then Snake Skin arose in his place and with becoming modesty said:

"Fathers and mothers, and comrades and people, you all know how White Buffalo and myself were children together. You all know how in all things which were brave and manly and for the well-being of our friends and camp, he outstripped me, he forever excelled me, and you all know how this made me jealous, how my spirit was filled with envy, how I did and said many nasty and mean things against White Buffalo; how I laughed in scorn and made great fun of him when we set out on this expedition, from which we have just returned. But I want to say so all may hear that for all this I am sorry. An evil spirit possessed me. I had no right to envy him because he was stronger than I, because he could run faster than I could, because he

could shoot straighter than I can, because he can ride a horse in a race or after buffalo with better success than I can, because his heart is better than mine, because his whole being is braver and greater than mine. I say to you today, I had no right to envy him in all this, and because I did foolishly envy him, I want now openly to tell you I am sorry. His conduct on this trip was ever kind. I was ever mean and cowardly. When he killed the grizzly, the great bear, I felt a shock. I said to myself, your whole life is a mistake, Snake Skin. And when we charged the camp, and when in the middle of the fight I was about to be killed by one of our enemies, White Buffalo came to my rescue. He saved my life, his heart is so big that he forgave his enemy and willingly risked his life to save mine. And now I want to tell you, you, my people, that henceforth White Buffalo shall be my chief. Nevermore will you hear me say a word—for I will not even think it—against him who has always borne with my folly and forgiven it, and to whom I owe my life.”

And as he sat down the drums beat and another anthem of thanksgiving came from the hearts and voices of the people. They were grateful that the Good Spirit had not forgotten them, and that in their camp and of their race had sprung one destined to be their leader.

You can imagine the joy of the mother. You can feel the thrill of pride that filled the heart of the father. In great embarrassment, our hero sat beside *Papamotao* and listened to this recital and praise of his conduct

and deeds. And yet forever his heart was away in the northland, and he thought: "All this which has come to me would be as nothing compared to my gaining the heart and life of *Nagos*."

And the drums beat and the dancers sprang to their feet and the whole camp was in motion. But White Buffalo sat and thought and his affections were away in the North Wind Maker's lodge. He wondered where this might be, and he vowed unto himself that when the rivers and lakes would set fast he would again go on the quest and search until he found.

CHAPTER VI.

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With Snake Skin He Again Journeys North

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**A**FTER the triumphant return of the party after the great feast and the big dance that ensued, the large camp broke up into a number of small camps. White Buffalo's and Snake Skin's people moved on over the divide between the two river systems, and followed down the course of the Swan. Hunting meat, trapping and slaying fur-bearing animals for trade purposes, these were their pursuits for the next half moon, and the winter came on strong, and the rivers and lakes bridged over, and White Buffalo said to himself: "I must make ready and search the north country before the snow becomes deep."

Snake Skin, who was now his inseparable companion, said to him one day when they were out hunting: "What is the matter with you, White Buffalo? For some moons I have seen that there was something on your mind."

And thus he talked to his friend, and reaching the summit of a hill, where they stopped to rest for a brief moment, White Buffalo told Snake Skin where he had

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been, and whom he had found. He, moreover, told him that very shortly he was going to start on another journey, and discover if possible where these people now dwelt. He would hunt them up in their own country, and hoped to renew his acquaintance with the North Wind Maker and his family. Then up spoke Snake Skin: "That is right, my friend, and as it is too far and too dangerous for you to go alone, I will go with you."

White Buffalo answered: "If you so wish I will be glad."

So in the midst of their hunting and trapping the two young men secretly planned and made ready for their trip into the north. In the meanwhile White Buffalo's mother had said to her husband:

"It is not for nothing that our son disappeared in the early part of the autumn. He found people. His heart has been touched. I knew it when he came back. Never a word has he spoken, but all this time some maiden whom we have never seen is in his mind, is on his heart."

Thus spoke the mother, wise in her intuitions, and the father with a quiet smile did answer:

"Well, if it is so, he is but doing as I did."

And then they beamed with love and affection into each other's eyes, and understood the matter and were silent.

One day White Buffalo said to his mother: "Do not be troubled, my mother, if I should not come back for a few nights. Do not be alarmed."

And with a tremor on her lips the mother answered:

"Be brave, be good, my son; may you be prospered in what is right."

This was all; so when the night and the day came, and another night passed, and people in camp wondered where White Buffalo and Snake-Skin had disappeared to, and many speculations were afloat, and some little search was made for them, and the word came in: "Two tracks have been seen striking into the north country." And in this way our hero had gone on his second quest. In those days, as in the days, long years afterwards, the Indian went out unburdened. An extra pair of mocassins or two stuck in his belt, having made sure that in his little kit he was possessed of awl and sinew, and even of this latter being careless, for could he not replenish by the way as the result of his hunt? Making sure that he carried flint and steel, as for the rest, his trust was in the all-merciful provision of the Great Spirit, and in his own skill in the use of bow or gun or snare. On towards the star that never moved, on forever looking for the trace of man who might possibly be found hunting in this forest land which our travellers had entered upon. On with unwearied limbs and unquenchable desire in the heart of White Buffalo. On with unwearied limbs, and strong and forever stronger friendship in the heart of Snake Skin. Thus the short days of early winter passed, and morning after morning our travellers were far on their journey when daylight came, but with the shadows lengthening

in the evening they would make themselves as comfortable as they could wish with spruce bows, with swamp grass, with willow brush, as the case might be. They quickly and deftly would change the face of things so that coming upon them, the neatness of the camp, and the welcome there, would be a great surprise. Habit and knowledge out of the centuries, with life-long adaptation to environment, helped these men to make out of what would seem extreme poverty and misery to other men comfort and even luxury. They passed the spot where White Buffalo had found Nagos and her people. He lingered fondly on the scene. They thought it was futile to attempt to take the trail of summer. These people had travelled by canoe, but they followed down the little stream until it debouched into a large river, and this in turn to its mouth in the lake. Then from point to point on to the end of the big lake, and across the portage, and on down the next lake, then presently to the joy of White Buffalo and his friend they came upon the track of a man who evidently was out hunting. Following this trail they came to a long portage through which there was a beaten road. Every little way there were lynx snares cunningly hung and alternating with these there were deadfall traps for marten, and then they knew that somewhere in advance and not very far away there would be a lodge or lodges. It might be the North Wind Maker's home. At any rate they hoped for tidings of this camp they had come so far to find. Quickening their pace and reaching the summit of the



portage they were delighted to see in the distance the smoke of the camp. Travelling on, they came to where a load of fresh meat had been pulled out from the forest onto the trail they were following.

"Well done," said they, "there is meat among the people."

Hurrying on, in due time they approached this camp, and found that it consisted of two lodges. Eagerly White Buffalo scanned these lodges, for he well remembered the one he had seen during the summer. Eagerly he watched the people of the camp as they moved to and fro, but in all this he was disappointed. This was not the North Wind Maker's lodge, but doubtless these people had tidings of him. So our young men, donning their paint and smoothing their braids, walked into the camp.

Drawing near, they sang the travellers' song: *O-mane-tao negahmoon*. Thus they announced their coming, and relieved these strangers of anxiety as to their identity. They were received graciously, and made welcome. As the day was far spent they were easily persuaded to stay over night. From these Indians they learned that the North Wind Maker was last heard of near the Big Rapids—that he was camped in that vicinity some ten nights since. This was good news to White Buffalo. Without asking directly, he found that all was well in the North Wind Maker's lodge. Ineed, there were many questions to be asked. But he left all this

for Snake Skin to do, and Snake Skin found out what his friend desired to know without seeming to have done so.

These men from the borders of the great plain, where the tribes were forever at war, where the buffalo were the chief food, came into the lives of these more northern people as something entirely new. Many were the questions put to them, and Snake Skin had a glorious opportunity to laud and magnify his friend.

With the early morning, refreshed and invigorated, with the direct intelligence they had found, our travellers pursued their journey. Lake and river and portage, land of cariboo and moose, and full of whitefish and sturgeon, the whole country was interesting to these young men. They were now farther afield than the most of their people had ever been. They were closer to the star that never moves than ever before, and there comes a thrill of delight in the accomplishment of having come into new fields. White Buffalo was stirred profoundly. This was the land of *Nagos*. She was forever in his thought. They had been directed by the hospitable friends with whom they stopped the night as to the country ahead. There are no people that can direct a traveller better than the aboriginal nomads of this continent, and so far as we know there is no language that lends itself to directions and topography as well as the Cree.

So now as with chart and compass our young men went straight. The next day they heard the roar of the big rapid. They saw the frosty mist which hung over

them, but as yet there were no fresh indications of humanity. To say that a camp was here ten nights ago might mean that that camp was ten days' travel distant. It would altogether depend upon the success of the hunter, or the definite purpose of the trapper. They crossed the Big Saskatchewan above the rapid, they climbed the hill and portaged down the river beside the falls, and presently came upon a track just made. Indeed, they caught the lone hunter on his way home to camp. He was startled, but they soon set him at ease, and travelling with him, it was not long before the diplomatic Snake Skin had found out that North Wind Maker's camp was still beyond. He and his people had moved into the greater forest country. However, our young men knew that, travelling as they were, they could very soon overtake any camp that might be two or three days ahead of them. Again they yielded to the urgent invitation, and spent the night with these new-found friends. Once more they were in the lodges of the north people and partaking of their hospitality. The same language, but dialectical. It was much easier for their hosts to understand them than for them to understand these people. Nevertheless, they thoroughly understood one another. Here they feasted on whitefish and sturgeon. This was new diet for our Western Indians. Smoked and dressed as a thrifty Indian woman can dress and smoke to a turn, and sturgeon are food for a king. Here also there was much interchange of life history and adventure. White Buffalo listened and

occasionally asked pertinent questions, but Snake Skin as ever in his element describing the lives of his people and the adventures of his friend. With the break of the day they were away, and as the trail was fresh they made quick time, and the sun was still high when they approached the North Wind Maker's camp. This time they took special pains with their costume. The little round mirrors which they carried in the beaded pouches, hung by strips of otter skin, and these brightened up with alternating ermine skin, and suspended around the neck and carried on the breast, these were brought into play, and braids were smoothened, and face was painted, and garments re-arranged, and again singing the arrival song, the *Omanotao* hymn, White Buffalo and Snake Skin entered the camp. North Wind Maker happened to be at home when they arrived. Neither parents were very much surprised at White Buffalo's return. Even as White Buffalo's mother had instinctively known what happened to her son, so these parents noticed that a new emotion had come into their daughter's life. They had seen her many times looking westward and southward. They had watched when she little thought and beheld the wrapt gaze when doubtless her spirit was travelling far, and then the awakening which came when the experience was satisfactory. All this these parents had seen, and within the last few days had noted in a marked manner. So, as we said, they were not surprised. He had come. Of course he would come. This had been their thought. They had not had recourse to the medicine man, this

man who could send out his spell and compassing many days' journey, enthrall the distant lover so that perforce he must return, and never cease his travels until he is once more in the lodge of her who claims him as her mate. Oh, no, they felt that there was no need for this. They knew the worth of their daughter. Many a suitor had approached them for her hand, and their answer always had been:

"She is only the Little Mother. She is still very young," but when last summer they saw White Buffalo come into their camp, and again go out from it, and they looked at *Nagos*, they felt that this might be indeed the purpose of the Great Spirit. White Buffalo was in ecstasy, and yet he dare not lift his eye to look at the maiden of his love, now that he had come into her presence. He heard her speak, he knew she was there, he heard her answer Snake Skin's questions. Snake Skin could talk to everybody. Already he was saying to himself: "Just the wife for my friend; no wonder his first glance at this girl has changed his whole life, no wonder he has been different since he came back last summer; no wonder he was so eager to make this long journey. Why, it seems to me, I could travel for many moons if I could find a girl like this. I am glad I insisted on coming with White Buffalo. Now I can tell in the tents of our people what kind of a woman will rule in White Buffalo's lodge." All this time he was talking to the father and mother, and sometimes to little *Nagos*, just as if he had always lived in the lodge with them.

But poor White Buffalo was silent and constrained and abashed. Nevertheless, his whole being was tingling with joy. North Wind Maker had never gone to war, but he had been in many a hunting adventure, and also in many a narrow escape in rapid and fall. He had seen the great ocean *Kechegame*. Winnipeg was but a pool of water compared with that. And with stories of adventure and travel, and recitations of traditional life, he entertained his guests.

The North Wind Maker, and the few Indians that were with him, were in the big moose country, and one in which there was grand opportunity for trapping, and the very next day White Buffalo went with North Wind Maker on a hunt and Snake Skin accompanied the son on his round to their line of snares and traps. White Buffalo and the old hunter had not gone very far from camp when they came across fresh tracks of caribou. White Buffalo had never heretofore had opportunity to hunt caribou. The *Muskegatik* is a very distinct animal from the dog deer of the barren lands, which are still numerous in the far north. The North Wind Maker scrutinized the track, and thought of where the wind had come from since yesterday. Then he took in the topography of the country they were in, and said:

"I expect they are now in the big muskeg, and that is not very far away." And White Buffalo said: "I would very much like to see them," and the elder man answered, "Well, let us give up moose for today and hunt caribou."

White Buffalo had his bow and quiver, the North Wind Maker his old flintlock. Quietly but quickly they made their way through the forest, heeding not the trail of the caribou, but going straight to where the old hunter thought the game might be found. Now it was a little run, again it was a fast springing walk, and soon they came to the edges of the big muskeg. The open spaces grew larger. The spruce and poplar and birch gave way to the larch and tamarac. The moss began to thicken under their feet.

"What is that?" said White Buffalo in a quiet tone. "Where?" came the answer. "Yes, that is one; your eye is quick, young man."

In the meantime White Buffalo, now that he knew the form and color of the animal, saw several.

"Would you like to kill one?" said North Wind Maker to White Buffalo.

"Yes," was the answer, "I am curious to kill one if I can."

"Well," said the North Wind Maker, "you had better take my gun." "No," answered White Buffalo, "let me use my own weapon."

And he failed to see the unbelieving smile that went over the face of the old hunter, who in the meantime reconnoitered the ground and suggested the plan of the hunt.

"We will go this way; we will approach them from yonder. Where they are situate we cannot expect to come very near. When we approach as near as we can, you shoot your arrows first and I will use my gun later."

Then they proceeded to stalk their game. In this White Buffalo was guided by the old hunter. Silently and with great circumspection they came as near as they dared to the band of caribou. Some were lying down, others were feeding quietly beside them. Stopping under the cover of the nearest vantage point, "What do you think?" said the North Wind Maker. "Will your arrows reach from here?" "I hope so," was the answer.

White Buffalo had in the interval taken several arrows from his quiver. Then he glanced along the length of each one carefully, and straightened them where they needed it. He smoothed down the feathers, saw that the shods were true and plumb in their fastenings, sprang his bow, and gave it a trial pull, and then looked at the elder man as if to say, "Well, shall I now attempt my shot?" And the old man quietly nodded. He also had looked to his gun, had seen to the flint and steel, and put fresh powder in the pan, and now stood ready.

White Buffalo looked at the game, and picked without questioning what he thought was the older dam of the herd, near which there fed an enormous buck, and having in his mind gauged the distance, and felt the breeze, he pulled his bow, and let the arrow fly. His calculation was exact. The circle of the arrow through the air was true, and right into the body of the deer it pierced just behind the shoulder blade. The old hunter looked at his young friend in wonderment, and as the deer moved a little, and the effect upon the herd



had been the jumping onto their feet of those that were lying down, he merely waved a signal to the North Wind Maker and pulled another arrow to its head, and again this went straight to the mark, and another caribou was plumped, and the deer, thoroughly startled, stood and looked, knowing not as yet whence came the disturbance, and by this time he had pulled another arrow and hit the third deer, and the old hunter, greatly astonished at his wonderful skill, raised his gun and shot one also. Then the herd jumped, but as they jumped and were gathering speed, White Buffalo pulled another arrow, and again it flew where it had been intended for, and hit his fourth deer. This last shot, which the North Wind Maker keenly watched while he was re-loading his flintlock gun, but added to his wonder, and he said:

"I am glad that there still are men who can use the weapons of our fathers with such skill as you do. These loud-sounding irons which the white man has brought have taken away a great deal of the marksmanship of our people. In this northern country I do not know of a single man who could do what you have done today."

White Buffalo was very glad to hear this praise, and was thankful that he had been given such strength and skill. Both men went to work at once to skin and cut up the animals. The common method by hunters is to bury the meat and hides in the snow drift. The manner of procedure is as follows: Lay each piece on the snow as it is cut from the animal, then, when the work of butchering is finished, the meat would have

become quite cool. Then hollow out a place in the snow, and lay the meat in this, and, having also spread the hide upon the surface of the snow to cool it, you cover the meat with the hide, and then cover the whole pile with a thick layer of snow, which will in turn freeze solid on the surface, and act as a protection for the meat. Then put a triangle of poles right over the meat pit, and hang from the centre of these some article of your apparel, and if you cannot spare anything else, use your gun coat. Our hunters at this time made one pit for the five animals. When they were at the last caribou, the North Wind Maker said:

"You see that mound of hill up there covered with timber? Passing near that very late this fall, I saw signs of a bear as if he was going to den up somewhere in that vicinity. If you do not mind while you are finishing here I will go over there and look. I might possibly find the den." White Buffalo said: "Very well," and away went the North Wind Maker.

When White Buffalo was nearly through with the cache of caribou, he heard a shot and said to himself:

"The old man has found a bear," and as soon as he had finished with his part of the work he ran over towards the timber-covered hill, and as he came nearer, he heard sounds of a tussle, and hastening on he found that he was just in time to try and save the North Wind Maker's life. He saw the bear struggling with the man under him, and he said to himself:

"Now, I dare not risk an arrow for fear I hit the hunter. I must use my knife."

So to be entirely free in the struggle he threw his bow and quiver on the limb of a tree, and grasping his scalping knife rushed in to try and save his friend if possible.

The bear was so intent with his victim that the young hunter was upon him before Bruin was aware, and White Buffalo grasped the huge animal by the throat with his left hand and pulled the bear from the prostrate man, and as he did this he struck the knife home with the other hand. The bear tried to spring at him, but the young man was strong, and the knife had gone straight, and was still doing its work, and even as the great brute opened his jaws to snap at the young hunter, the blood came in heavy volume and very soon he fell back over in a dying condition. By this time the North Wind Maker had scrambled to his feet, and White Buffalo was glad to see that his head and face were intact, and though there was blood streaming down his clothes, he very soon found that it came from his shoulder. The old hunter, stretching his arm, and doubling it up, said, with a voice full of gratitude:

"It was only my flesh he was trying to eat; but, my young friend, if you had not come when you did he would have finished me! You see I have neither gun nor knife. Both are somewhere in the snow around here. I found his den, but my gun missed fire and went off after I had moved my sight, and the bear jumped out

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unhurt, and being so strong, he knocked my gun out of my hand, and then before I could use my knife he knocked that out of my hand also, and he gripped me, and in our struggle my foot slipped, and I went down, with the bear on top of me. And being without weapons and my face down fortunately, I said to myself: "Let me be quiet," because very often I have known that when a bear thinks he has killed the man he will leave him alone for the time being. However, he had me altogether at his mercy when you came to my rescue. I am indeed thankful that you saved my life. You are truly brave and strong!"

They skinned the bear and cached the meat even as they had the caribou, and, taking some of the tit-bits with them, they returned to camp, reaching there in the late evening of the day. In the meanwhile White Buffalo had bound up the North Wind Maker's wound as well as he could. They found that the son of the camp and Snake Skin had brought in heavy loads of lynx and marten. The snares and the traps had done good work, the hunters had to cache some of the strangled lynx, not being able to pack them home on this trip.

The North Wind Maker, having had his wounds dressed by his wife and daughter, and as he reclined on a lean-to in the lodge that night gave the little company a vivid account of the day's hunt. He told of the wonderful archery and he emphasized the brave deeds of the young man who rushed in at the peril of his own life and saved his. The mother of the camp beamed

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with gratitude towards White Buffalo for thus coming to the rescue of her husband, and Nagos, who was one of the most dutiful of children, and dearly loved her father, spoke up and said:

"We thank you for what you have done for us today."

White Buffalo modestly said he did not see how he could have done anything else, and it was all even as the spirits would have it done. "I am glad I saw the caribou, having never seen them before; and I am glad my first shots at them were true. And I am very glad I ran over and saw what had happened, and came there in time to help your father."

Snake Skin spoke up:

"That is just like him. White Buffalo is a friend of the spirits, therefore the spirits love him. I am truly glad he has done another brave act."

In the meanwhile as our travellers' visit in these northern camps went on, though but for a few days, the winter had strengthened, and the snow had deepened, and the North Wind Maker, being somewhat disabled because of his fight with the bear, improved his time in the lodge in making a couple of pairs of light snowshoes, such as the people used in his country. All travellers who have experience will have noted that snowshoes, even like dialects and tribal language, are very dissimilar in shape and form all across the continent. One class of Indians make and use a very different snowshoe from that of another. The North

Wind Maker was an adept at snowshoe making, and when White Buffalo and Snake Skin were ready to start back, he presented them with these snowshoes. Nagos and her mother put them up some finely-cured caribou and moose meat, and also some bear's fat. White Buffalo had taken the opportunity, when all the rest were engaged in occupations outside, and he and the North Wind Maker were alone in the lodge, to say to him:

"I desire to become the husband of your daughter. I have hope that she looks upon me with favor. I trust that you and her mother will approve of our becoming man and wife. Ever since I came to your lodge last summer, my heart has been with you. I have travelled far since then, but my thought has ever turned your way. I could not rest in the lodges of my people. Therefore, my friend and I have come and sought you this winter. And now, before I return, will you tell me what you think?"

And the elder man said:

"My daughter is still young—she is as the little queen in our camp. Her mother and myself would fain keep her with us always, but we know this cannot be. As it was with us so it must come to her, and I will tell you that if the Great Spirit spares our lives, and if my daughter's heart is as I believe it is now, we will be camped when the same moon is shining next summer in the same spot, and if you change not, and come to our lodge then, we will give you Nagos to wife."

And White Buffalo answered: "So be it. You have filled my heart with joy. If I live I will be there."

It was not the custom in those days to shake hands and make adieus. Men and women looked into each other's eyes, and the warrior and hunter threw his little pack over his shoulder, and fastened his extra moccasins in his belt, and again looking at his friends, thus departed.

Snake Skin knew it was all right. He rejoiced in his friend's happiness. It was wonderful, this transformation that was going on in Snake Skin's life. To be the friend of a better man than himself, to fully recognize this fact, was Snake Skin's present condition, and it was working his regeneration.

We will not tramp the long miles, we will not wait in the winter camp, we will not now walk through the dark portages under the snow-laden boughs, we will not make the long stretches across on the ice of the Great Lake, from point to point, from island to island; and up the valley of the long river, and back to the height of land between this and another river. But we will enter into the Cree lodges with White Buffalo and Snake Skin, and rejoice with their people because of their safe home-coming.

White Buffalo's father and mother knew that their son's mission was successful. They saw it in his face. They heard it in his speech. His every act was as the story of his successful wooing. They could listen to Snake

Skin, who would drop into their lodge, and tell them about the north country and the great lakes and the big river which overshadowed all the rivers, and the great rapids, and the sturgeon and the whitefish, and the caribou, and the North Wind Maker and his wife and their wonderful kindness. But when it came to Nagos, then he would find it hard to express himself. She was beautiful, she was good, she was clever. Oh, yes, they were proud of White Buffalo, and well they might be. He was proud of White Buffalo, but if it ever happened, and he believed it would, that White Buffalo brought Nagos to his lodge, then surely they, White Buffalo's father and mother, and Snake Skin, White Buffalo's friend, and all the people who belonged to their camp, would be the proudest and the most favored of the whole Cree nation.

Thus he would talk. Then White Buffalo's mother would laugh and say:

"Snake Skin, you have a wonderful tongue."

Nevertheless, she was delighted, for she loved her boy and fully believed that his love would be fitting.

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CHAPTER VII.

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He Takes the Warpath the Second Time.

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THE BUFFALO came well up into the north country that winter, and provisions were plentiful, and the making of robes, and the trapping of furs, and the gathering of hides for domestic use, and for the making of new lodges, kept the whole camp busy. And the spring came, and with the coming of the wild goose, and the re-appearing on the ground of the gopher and the crocus, and the grass springing, the warriors and young men of the camp felt that it was time for them to bestir themselves on the war-path. During the winter several large timber wolves had been killed, and White Buffalo had secured some of the best pelts, and his mother had dressed these for him. Any one entering the lodge would have immediately had their attention drawn to the decorations therein. These were almost altogether made up of the large timber wolves' pelts, and, as every one knows, these skins when prime make up handsome. But why saddle cloth and lean-to cloths, and panel robes, especially on the side occupied by

White Buffalo, should be made up altogether of the large wolf skins, only the initiated could tell the reason. In the minds of his parents, and in those of the older members of the tribe, the reason was patent. The big timber wolf was the visible manifestation of the spirit of White Buffalo's dream.

Furthermore, if one frequented this lodge, one would have noticed that never by those resident therein, or by visitors, were these decorations and wolf skins mentioned. On this topic there was absolute silence in this camp and lodge. Further, the stranger with any perceptive faculty would have also seen that whenever it was necessary to re-arrange these robes and mats and decorations, no matter who touched them, this act was done with scrupulous care, and in a spirit of solemn reverence. Never would any occupant of this lodge, or any of their friends, forget that all these were the spiritual emblems of the young warrior-hunter's faith.

Within the range of a wide experience the writer has never met more absolute consideration for other men's faith than that manifest among the aboriginal tribes of North America. A closer inspection would take note, moreover, of the long sash or color-looking article handsomely trimmed with crimson cloth and ermine skin, but the main portion was a strip of great wolf's pelt, being the back from the tip of the nose to the extreme end of the tail. This strip, about a hand-breadth wide, had been carefully and precisely cut

out, and perfectly dressed. This was White Buffalo's shoulder strap, or medicine belt. In following the customs of his father's people, he would occasionally wear this, perhaps when some great battle was imminent, or some annual religious festival was on. Then this medicine belt was produced. This especially commanded the care and constant attention of the residents in this camp or lodge. To select these skins, to have them dressed and decorated, took up the spare time of White Buffalo's mother and her women friends who might visit her during the winter months of this period. And yet while all manner of gossip might go on, the special object of this work, and the quality thereof, and him who would be the owner, were topics never mentioned.

The war expedition of that spring was a young man's enterprise. Snake Skin was the prime mover. Young men of his and White Buffalo's age were to participate. All who could were to go. Of course, he had settled it in his own mind that White Buffalo must be the leader. White Buffalo's word must be law on this trip. During the winter he had gone through the camp working up this enterprise. He did all this before he broached the subject to White Buffalo, and, being a tactful fellow, he did it through the man's love. White Buffalo of himself would not delight in war. He had not thought of hurriedly pushing on the war-path again. His delight was in hunting and trapping, and when he thought within himself, the question always arose: Why hate your fellow-man? Why kill

your fellow-man? A man's language, or the name of his tribe, or the fact that his people and your people had been at enmity in the days that were gone seemed altogether insufficient reason for war in White Buffalo's mind. Snake Skin knew all this. Therefore, he took another way of securing his friend. He discoursed as they were out hunting one day on the virtue and beauty and grace of little *Nagos*. He told White Buffalo over again the story of the evening when the North Wind Maker was telling the people of the camp how White Buffalo had rushed in and saved his life. "Oh," said he, "you were not looking, but I was, and as her father told the story of how you rushed in and rescued him, I saw her eye kindle, and her face illumine, and her whole spirit move within her. I knew she was saying to herself: 'Ah, there is a man, there is a man—one such as I can love.' It is for such deeds as these that women like *Nagos* worship the man they love, and we must do more of them, White Buffalo. You and I must go to war this spring. When the snow melts and the grass springs, and the young men of our camp, with you as their leader, must do great deeds, and bring, if we can, much glory back with us from the lodges and country of our enemies. Moreover, you expect to go and meet the North Wind Maker and his camp. You expect those people to give you their daughter to wife, and for her sake and for their sake it will be fitting for you to have led us to that which will bring honor and

fame to our people. I will want to go with you when you go north this autumn, and I want something worth while to have to tell those people."

Thus did Snake Skin frequently reason until finally White Buffalo consented, and soon it was known all through the various camps which were now beginning to converge towards one of their favorite meeting places, and it was told far and wide:

"When the nesting moon is still small White Buffalo will lead the young men forth on the war path."

Because of this preparations went on in many a lodge. With this end in view all through the wild goose and frog moons, young men were making ready. On the surface they were making lariats and quirts and looking to bow and quiver and flintlock and war club and knife. And mothers and wives and sweethearts were making mocassins or beading robes, or helping to fix neat and strong some distinctive war dress. Inwardly and personally, and spiritually, each man was communing with his familiar spirit, seeking a sign of approval if possible, and a benediction upon the enterprise in hand. All these personal and private communings were in proportion to the religious instinct possessed by each one. Snake Skin was in his element. He visited some of the neighboring camps. He harangued the listening crowd in the dance lodges; he talked to groups of young men around many camp fires. He forever extolled the virtue and wisdom and pluck of White Buffalo. He dropped his voice almost

to a hushed whisper as he spoke mysteriously of the intercourse of his great friend with the supernatural. He prophesied victory and much glory under the leadership of such a character as his young chief, White Buffalo. By the time of the waning of the frog moon a large percentage of the able young men from all the camps constituent to this gathering were eager and ready for the war path.

In the meantime White Buffalo had made a big fur hunt and killed many food animals. His zest for this work was strong and his skill becoming greater all the time. No wonder his friend Snake Skin said of him:

"The spirits love White Buffalo."

During the goose moon he rescued a couple of young men who had broken through the ice where the sun above and the current beneath had worn it thin, and the snowfall had covered these spots as with a big new blanket. And these young fellows would have drowned but for the speed and skill and strength of our young hero, who, without a moment's thought for himself, came to their help and rescued them from death. Thus White Buffalo's prestige grew, and gatherings of bands discussed him, as indeed fit to lead in all things. Many an evening he spent with *Papamotao*, the great traveller, and also in the lodge of the old arrow maker, studying the geography of the western and southern country, and listening to the experiences of the expeditions in which these old warriors had taken part. And, presently, when all was ready, he gave the

signal call, and from the many lodges there sprang the young and brave to follow his lead into the country of their enemy. Mothers and wives and sisters and sweet-hearts watched the converging groups of young men, as these gathered in the growing distance into line behind the stately stepping of their leader, White Buffalo. Snake Skin, anxious that none should fail, lingered, taking stock, and speaking a word of encouragement, and when all were fully on the way hastened forward to the side of his much-loved friend.

CHAPTER VIII.

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He Shows His Quality as War Chief.

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**W**ITHOUT noise or ostentation, this expedition started on its quest for scalps and horses and glory, and incidentally revenge. As to equipment, each man carried all he had. Old flintlock, powder horn, and bullets; bow and quiver, full of selected arrows, scalping or hunting knife, flint and steel and punk, horse lines and quirt, mocassins, awl and shoe needle, small mirror and some little bags of ochre. Some few might carry some roots or herbs, but as for this part these could generally be found by the way. Not a pound of provisions of any kind could be found on the persons of this whole company. Theirs it was to forage as they travelled.

There had been a distinct understanding between White Buffalo and the head men of the camp that when the war party returned, if they lived to return, the place of meeting should be out on the big plain, and soon after the young men had departed the large camp began its movement south and west. The buffalo had moved



this same way earlier in the season. White Buffalo led his braves along the course of the last autumn trip. At the first encampment he took stock and arranged the line of march, selecting his captains of groups, making each one understand his place. He said to the assembled crowd:

"You chose me as your leader, and I will exact strict obedience. If there are any who will not give this, let them now return to the camp from whence we came."

But from each and all came the answer: "We will follow you; we will do your bidding."

And thus White Buffalo and his men understood each other. He made Snake Skin his second in command, and kept him free from any group. He also kept out from any group the seer, the man "who sees beyond,"—*Okosapuhchegao*. This latter was the only oldish man with the company. The work of organization accomplished, the guards were set, and the scouts sent out in advance, and the rest slept. On the outward path, unless exigency demanded, there were not forced marches. The ordinary day's journey was about thirty miles. Sometimes this distance was covered during the night. The scouts for the day might make double this distance, as a great deal of their movement was on the run. In the development of leg and lung these men of one diet and natural out-of-door life were splendid. The third day out they caught up to the buffalo, and from thence on their commissariat was assured. Their

course was westerly, and as they travelled summer came. So long as they had timber, they made their shelters and couches of the fresh and fragrant foliage. To the uninitiated, the cosy comfort of some of these temporary resting places would be astonishing. An Indian with a hunting knife and some brush will create out of small material a sheltering hut, and do this in short time. Our warriors were now travelling amid tens of thousands of buffalo and antelope and they tried as they moved to disturb these as little as possible, for every such disturbance was significant of human presence to anyone who might be looking from the other way. Sometimes for this reason wide detours were made, and always they exercised great prudence when killing for food. When they had travelled some fifteen days, and had not discovered any signs of the enemy, the seer sent his spirit out into the front of their course, and when his spirit returned, and he came out of his trance, he told the eagerly waiting company that after four nights' journey they would come into the vicinity of the enemy, and that the lodges of the enemy were numerous. He also told them that he saw much blood and many horses, but he could not tell whose blood it might be. All this was stimulating and exciting to this band of young braves. They moved on with increased carefulness. White Buffalo kept them constantly on the alert. His discipline was kind but strict, and in all his plans he was faithfully supported by Snake Skin,

who, from being his enemy, was now his most loyal friend. Association with a natural nobleman was making a true man of Snake Skin.

Sure enough, after two days' march, the signs were that humanity of some kind was not so very far away. The buffalo were thinning out, and some traces of a hunting trip were found by the scouts. These signs were not many days old, and were those of the Blackfoot tribe. Our war party was now near the *Kahnemetaway-askwasog*, which means "where the timber runs out on to the plains." This is now known as Maple Creek. After this, the main body moved at night only.

Again the seer went into a trance and sent his spirit out to reconnoitre. This time the report was the enemy was in the valley of the *Askawesepc*, which means "running open in winter," where two small streams meet and run into the big river. They are strong in numbers, but easily approached.

While White Buffalo put a certain amount of faith in these spirit travels, he increased his scouting vigilance, sending out his best and most experienced men, and himself moving on in advance of his party, and it was while engaged in this work he again strengthened the faith of these men by performing another brave act. The first glimmering dawn of approaching day found White Buffalo far in advance of his party. For hours he had moved stealthily on, now listening, sometimes resting, ever and always humming his consecration hymn, fully weighted with a sense of his responsibility

as a much trusted leader. Here was his following awaiting his bidding. Yonder in the far eastern distance was the large camp, also waiting and wondering and anxious. Parents and wives and sweethearts and loved ones, young and old, all on the strain. And forever in his thought, and still farther beyond, was little *Nagos*, the queen of his heart, the mainspring of his purpose. As he thought of her he gathered himself in strong effort and sent his message to his beloved. "Would she stir in her sleep on the bank of the distant stream? Yea, verily, she had felt his message of love, her heart moved, and her pulse beat faster, and she sent back the answer: "Yes, my beloved White Buffalo, I love you—I love you." And his whole being tingled with joy, and his soul filled with noble resolve to do and dare for her sake. For *Nagos* he would brave all things.

And thus the day dawned, and he moved on under cover of undulating plain and hill. He had not gone far, and the sun was just about to appear, when his quick eye caught a distant object, and then another and another, and as he watched these move over the summit of the ridge he quickly moved himself, and presently saw the three objects rise up and become men and run on, taking a westerly course. The thought came at once: "These are the scouts of our enemies. They have discovered us, and are now hurrying home with tidings of our approach. If these men get into camp all our venture on this trip is lost." Thus thought White Buffalo. And then it came to him to resolve to

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stop these men in their rush homeward. Quickly he took in the topography of the country ahead. Yonder was a range of hills. If he could gain these in advance of the three men he might do something to prevent their carrying tidings of his approach. The idea of one to three never bothered him for a moment. He was not of that breed. Hastily looking for cover, away he ran, taking long draughts of the glorious morning air. Steadily he went into the race set before him, and keenly watched the progress of his enemies. He felt sure that they had not seen himself, but he was equally sure they had seen or heard his party. Yonder, some miles on, and as an Indian would say, "A long run distant" were the hills. Let him outrace these men to those hills, and he would have time to plan the rest. Thus on he rushed. Now he was opposite, now he was gaining, now he was in advance. He must run faster than they were running. He must watch more and quicker than they need to. He must make sure as possible that there are not more of these scouts scattered in the vicinity. And as he ran every faculty was fully exercised, and after a steady long run he found himself ahead, and in the shelter of the hillocks and winding valleys of this range athwart the course.

Again he hummed his consecration hymn, and felt courage and strength coming to his being. Then suddenly his glance was caught by the head and shoulders of a great wolf which seemed to spring from nowhere, but yet was there looking at him. Yes, into his eyes

came the steady gaze of the huge beast. And White Buffalo was glad, and felt the strength of many men come into his head and arms and lungs and spirit. "The spirit of his dreams" was with him and all was well.

Even as he felt it, the wolf was gone, but the mission of inspiration was done, and White Buffalo felt nerve and muscle tingling with the prospect of fresh opportunity. He saw his enemies coming, he carefully noted the line of their approach. He put himself under cover across their course. He took three arrows from his quiver. He carefully straightened these with teeth and jaws and hands. He felt the edge of his knife, he swung his war club as in practice, and withal kept humming his consecration hymn and thinking of *Nagôs*, the beautiful Little Mother. He seemed to feel her presence and this made him gloriously glad.

Now his three enemies were near. He took stock of them, all stalwart fellows. Bows and quivers and war clubs, like himself, thus they were armed. White Buffalo felt satisfaction in all this. It was fair; and now he heard their heavy breathing as they ran. He felt his bow, and pulled the string, and then quickly placed an arrow, and as his enemies came around the knoll, he pulled and let his arrow fly at the leader, and straight the arrow went into the scout's breast. He dropped. And as the second came up, another arrow caught him, and down he came almost on his fellow. The third man now saw what had happened, and looking up beheld White Buffalo with another arrow pointing

straight at him and ready to take its deadly course. He heard the notes of the other's hymn, and as he grasped for his quiver, he felt the arrow of this grim foe piercing through his vitals, and down he also dropped, having finished his last race. These men would arouse no camp. Thus thought White Buffalo, as he carefully scanned the country and noted all things.

Then chanting the death song of his people he walked over to the death scene of his enemies. Two were dead and the third dying fast, and White Buffalo felt sorrow welling up in his breast because of this sad sight before him. Again the question came to this man, "Why should men seek to kill one another? And even as he thought of this his enemy breathed his last. Then White Buffalo took his arrows out and stuck them up to let the blood of the enemies of his people dry on them. Then he took the bows and quivers and war clubs, and lastly the scalp locks of his slain. And thus laden he made his course to intercept his party. White Buffalo came to his men where they were taking the midday rest, and for the sake of inspiring them and giving them encouragement, he sang the victory song as he walked into their midst. The scalp locks and bows and quivers and war clubs told the story of his deed, and he quietly assured his party that if these were the only men who had discovered their advance, this would not be known in the camp of their enemies.

He then admonished them as to vigilance, for there was no doubt about it, they had been seen. He now redoubled his efforts for a strictly careful movement,

and in all this was obeyed to the letter by all his following. Snake Skin went among them emphasizing the significance of White Buffalo's deed, inspiring every heart with reverence and profound respect for this wonderful young leader. That night the seer went into another trance, and coming back gave a vivid description of the camp of their enemy and its position, and urged haste, "for," said he, "they are contemplating crossing the big river, and it becomes us to strike them before they move on into the open country beyond."

All the next day our party moved as rapidly as the country allowed, and resting a short time in the evening, again pushed on under cover of darkness, and before daylight scout calls were heard and answered, and the tidings were brought in of a good-sized camp of the enemy down on the bank of the big river, even in the spot where the seer had reported it to be. White Buffalo then moved his men into hidden country and placed his best scouts out on every hand, and himself reconnoitered the Blackfoot camp, and constructed his plan of assault. The charge was to be made with the coming dawn. There was a prairie promontory overlooking the large flat between the river and a small stream which joined the river some distance below. He would some time during the coming night gather his men behind the nose of the hill and, at the proper moment, having arranged his companions, charge down onto the camp on the flat from two sides. One would go down by the river, and the other down the valley of



the small stream. Of course, all this depended on his not being discovered by the people of the camp. White Buffalo was determined to frustrate this if possible. For hours he watched this camp. Evidently, as the seer had said, they were preparing to move across the big river. Meat stagings were being taken down and hides and skins unlashd from the stretching poles, and packing up was going on. The hunters and warriors were engaged in games and gambling in many parts of the camp. White Buffalo saw that the situation and the time were both propitious for his venture, and he was thankful. This camp was large, and its warriors very much outnumbered his, but this in no wise disturbed our hero. He had about 150 men. There might be 500 in this camp, it mattered not. The spirits willing, he and his men would charge this camp, which he was now looking down upon, with the dawn of the next morning. And as he quietly hummed his hymn, there stood a little way from him a huge wolf, also looking down on the camp, and presently the wolf turned his head and looked straight at White Buffalo, and even as he returned the gaze, the wolf was gone. But White Buffalo's heart beat with joy, and he felt that his plans were endorsed by "the spirit of his dream"—his *Paw-akun* was with him at this time. Even as with men of old, he also was thankful for a sign.

The camp was not looking for trouble from the down country, as they called it. Were there not three of their good scouts out in that region somewhere?

These would bring them word of the approach of any stranger. Little did they dream that already coyotes and buffalo wolves were smelling around the bodies of their friends.

And now darkness fell upon both camp and war party, and the latter, except a few well-instructed scouts, was gathered at the rendezvous. Quietly White Buffalo explained his plans and arranged his men, and exhorted them to brave action. He made them all understand that the spot where they now were would be the gathering place after the battle for all who might survive. Then he moved the whole party on to the place he had seen in the distance as the proper point from whence to charge.

He had divided his company into two equal parts, and given Snake Skin command of the second party. White Buffalo would come down the river side, and Snake Skin charge in from the creek valley.

While all were resting as well as men can who have come a long distance for a specific object, and are now in the immediate presence of the issue, and that one of life and death, and glory and disaster, White Buffalo and Snake Skin were communing apart, and the subject of conversation was the Little Mother, *Nagos*. Snake Skin knew that his friend was profoundly stirred by the sense of his responsibility; that he keenly felt the weight thereof, and being the friend and diplomat he was, he sought to draw his attention. So he skillfully made an imaginary picture of the North Wind

Maker and his camp in the far away lake and forest country. He saw the beautiful *Nagos*, as she every little while turned her wistful gaze towards the western horizon. He knew her thought was forever with White Buffalo, and he spoke of the contemplated journey into that northern region during the coming autumn. White Buffalo let him talk on, for the subject was dear to himself and stirred his whole being, and did exactly what Snake Skin intended it should, that is, brought him back to his normal self, and fitted him for the fierce struggle which was at hand. By this time the night was far spent, and White Buffalo again quietly went over his instructions to the gathered crowd, and spoke a few words of inspiration and encouragement, and all was ready. The camp was still. Everything indicated that their presence was as yet undiscovered. The spirits were with them, and as if to emphasize this, all at once the seer, *Kosapachgao*, appeared in a new garb, moving to and fro in their midst. He was chanting in a low voice, and wearing a wonderful head dress.

"Ah," said Snake Skin, "he has put on his great medicine head dress! He believes White Buffalo will be victorious. He sees many scalps and horses coming to us."

And every man felt greatly encouraged, as he beheld this sign of faith in this man who was believed to look beyond. The day was approaching, and White Buffalo told Snake Skin to call in the scouts, and Snake

Skin gave the buffalo wolf howl, and several answers came from different directions, and in a short time the scouts were reporting to White Buffalo:

"There are but few of the enemy's people on guard; all was quiet."

Then White Buffalo spoke to Snake Skin:

"Go down on that side and approach the lodges until you are within half an arrow's flight. I will do the same on the other side. Then wait for my voice in the war-whoop and at once answer and charge."

And now as the day sky more fully revealed them to each other, these men looked into each other's eyes and separated for the onslaught. It was a still summer's morning. The current gently rippled around the bends in the creek below. On the other side the mighty river, mountain-fed, and just now beginning to fill with melting snows and dissolving glaciers of the distant heights, swept in stately windings down the slope. Far out on every hand the wild cattle and the beautiful graceful antelope fed in bunches, and great volumes of bird notes and coyote and wolf calls were heard. A few dogs barked in response to these, a colt whinnied, and the mare mother neighed, and stealthily and craftily, and with skill coming out of centuries, Snake Skin on one side and White Buffalo on the other were creeping down on their foe.

So they believed. So their fathers had taught them, and perhaps the only man in all this party who for a moment questioned the righteousness of the act was our

hero. And this was because of his higher endowment, of perceptive powers. All history and traditions, all environment, all earthly friendship and association encouraged him in this his present purpose. But still he thought within himself:

"Why this shedding of men's blood?"

But now the lodges are near, yonder is a sleepy-looking fellow. He must be caught before he can give the alarm, and with a gesture to his following, he slipped up behind the Blackfoot, and with one hand on his throat he sent his knife into the poor fellow's heart, and still all was quiet. His men had seen the act, and it stirred them to the core with respect for their leader's strength and skill and courage. Closer in they moved, and paused a little to give the other party time, and as the camp began to stir here and there, White Buffalo filled his lungs and made the valley ring with the battle-cry of the Crees. And at once the answer came from across the flats, and Snake Skin had charged. The rush was simultaneous and strong and quick. War club and knife rather than gun and arrows were the weapons. The startled Blackfeet, as many as could, ran to the bank of the river. But before this could be reached many lives were taken, and scalps were very soon dangling from the belt strings of the young Crees. Hand-to-hand encounters were common, as the Blackfeet fought bravely, but as is generally the case, the advantage was with the attacking party. It was Snake Skin's turn to come to the rescue of his young leader, who

was surrounded by a group of the enemy. He was dealing strong blows, and slaying right and left, but could not have stood against the odds much longer, when with a terrific yell Snake Skin jumped in and saved his loved friend.

"Come," said he, "let us scalp these and call off our men. We have done enough for this time," and White Buffalo acquiesced and the sun was not high, and the battle at Medicine Hat was over.

## CHAPTER IX.

## Triumphant Return of the War Party.

**W**HEN WHITE BUFFALO took stock of his party, ten were missing, and both himself and Snake Skin were slightly wounded. His people had taken a goodly number of horses and many scalps. The Blackfeet were sorely beaten, for they made no attempt to rally or follow their assailants. White Buffalo said:

"We will wait one day at our meeting place. It may be that some of our people will come in."

Here on guard, dressing wounds and arranging for the return journey, they spent the day and following night. However, none of their missing turned up. The next day they started on the return journey. White Buffalo and Snake Skin were bound together closer than ever, and they dressed each other's wounds and delighted in each other's presence. *Nagós* was often the subject of their conversation. The whole party was exultant. White Buffalo was a great leader. They had attacked a large camp. Their loss was small, and their

wounds few. They had taken many scalps and horses and were going home with much glory, and this they sang as they travelled eastward on the home journey. Their hope was that the big camp to which they belonged would now be out on the edge of the last timber stretches. The buffalo were plentiful, and life was young. The seer, *Kosapachegao*, had come out of the fight without a scratch, and had several scalps in his belt, and was, when he felt like it, astride a fine pony. His stock was up, and some of the impatient young men easily persuaded him to attempt to find the home camp. Accordingly he sent out his spirit, and, coming back, told the anxious crowd that the camp was on the south bank of the Chain of Lakes River, and moving westward. This was great news and stirred up the laggards in the party. If this was true, they might be home in ten or twelve days' time. Keeping a vigilant rear guard, and forever watching front and flank, White Buffalo pushed his men on the return journey. This ceaseless vigilance was well rewarded, for one day one of his scouts came in on the jump and reported a large war party on their northern flank. "Who are these?" was the question. And, selecting a natural basin among the hills to hold the horses and the wounded, White Buffalo rushed to see for himself who these might be his scout had seen. Carefully reconnoitering, he found that they were Blackfeet who, failing to come in with any camp of Crees, had turned short and were now on



the home stretch. From his vantage ground he counted them and saw that they did not quite number as many as his own party. So he concluded that it was too bad to let them go home without a fight. Running back to his own people, he left the seer in charge of horses and wounded, and took Snake Skin and a goodly squad of his men and struck across through the hills to intercept these enemies. Placing his men in ambush, directly in the line of the march of the coming party, he instructed them to use the bow, and to watch and emulate himself as the enemy came near. Said he:

"I will shoot the first arrow. Then all pull your bows and shoot as true as you can. We must show these people that they should be careful in coming east into our country." These Blackfeet had gone out on the north side of the south branch, and, failing to find a Cree camp, were now returning on the south side. Soon they were within the range of White Buffalo's archery, and he let his arrow fly at the foremost warrior, and pulled another and shot his second man before his followers, who were astonished at his skill as a marksman, took their part in the fray, and then the arrows flew, and the Blackfeet turned and fled, leaving a number of their men dead and dying on the field. White Buffalo forbade his men to follow.

"Scalp these, and take their weapons, and let us go. These Blackfeet will be more careful when they come this way next time."

Once more they had struck their enemy and suffered no loss. Jubilant and encouraged, and prouder than ever of their leader, they took their journey homeward.

Amongst the horses they had taken was one who, in appearance and action looked good, and by common consent belonged to White Buffalo, and one day as they journeyed a fine herd of buffalo came across their course. White Buffalo rushed at them on the back of his new horse and found him so speedy and well trained that he was prompted to do something more than the ordinary. That is, he sent his arrow into his first pick, and, pressing the noble horse close to his victim, he carefully withdrew it and shot the same arrow into another cow, and, repeating the act once more, shot the same arrow into the third animal. This was done in sight of the crowd, and was no small feat of horsemanship and hunting skill. Indeed, it had not been known that any man had killed three buffalo with one arrow, and both horse and rider were much admired for this unusual feat. Said Snake Skin on the side:

"I have told you he is no ordinary man. The spirits favor him because he is good."

And now, if their seer saw true, they would soon find their own people. To a few their home coming would bring sadness and sorrow. They felt this, but they reasoned that such has always been the case. The majority would rejoice and the whole camp be glad because of their victories.

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Suddenly one day a scout came in bringing the tidings that he had found where a hunting party had been as late as yesterday, and this hunting party had returned eastward. This he thought must be from their own camp. Everyone rejoiced, for if these were not their own people, at any rate they would have tidings of them. On they went, and the next morning word came in: "The camp is in sight!"

Our warriors were at home. This moving home had come to meet them more than a hundred and fifty miles. There were great rejoicings as White Buffalo and Snake Skin and *Kosapachegao* rode in at the head of their victorious warriors. The whole camp sang with them the victory song. The scalps and horses and all the glory were shared in patriotic joy by everybody.

"Our White Buffalo, our young men, have done brave things, and we will rejoice"; and the drums beat, and the best singers sang, and the scalp dance went fast and furious, and in the intervals Snake Skin took up the story of their trip and told of their leader's brave actions and wondrous deeds, and White Buffalo's parents listened and were glad, and all the people rejoiced with them. But White Buffalo's heart was in the north country, his spirit forever wandering with *Nagos*. Of her he dreamed, for her he planned, and because of his engagement with the North Wind Maker the summer days were passing slowly. Nearly three moons must wax and wane before he would take the trip which would bring him into the land of his queen. Snake Skin said:

"She will be very proud of you," but of himself White Buffalo was still doubtful, and it was this that made him say to Snake Skin after the home-coming:

"If I should be missing from camp, tell my mother not to worry."

"But I must go with you," said his friend, and the answer came, "No, I must be alone this time." He had reasoned thus with himself: "I have been with the crowd. On them I depended. It is not a fair test. I must go out alone and try myself without a friend near, except, perhaps, if I am worthy, 'the spirit of my dream' sees fit to help me."

CHAPTER X.

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*Single-handed He Brings in Several Horses.*

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**I**N A SHORT TIME there came a day and a night, and White Buffalo was missing. When his belongings were counted it was found that his war paraphernalia was gone with him. Snake Skin told his mother that it was all right. She need not worry. He would come back in due time. Nevertheless, she did worry. In the meanwhile White Buffalo was tramping out steadily in a new direction, aiming to cross the south branch and hunt the lodges of the enemy in the big country stretching away into the northwest. He had fully determined to test himself. Coming to the big river, he tied a few small sticks together, and, fastening all his clothes and weapons on this light raft, he pushed it ahead of him and swam the stream. This was his first big crossing of a strong current in a wide river, and he was thankful he had done it. So far so good. Now then for the new country to the west. On he went, always carefully under cover, his business to see but never be seen. During his fourth day from the river

-crossing he came upon fresh tracks of people, and that same afternoon saw two horsemen, and watched them make a kill, and, while they were skinning and cutting up the game, he crept nearer and made sure that they were of the Blackfoot tribe, and legitimate prey for him. He saw that they were armed as he was, and, selecting two arrows, he shot both men, and running in took their scalps and all their outfit. He had now to be extra careful, for he had two horses as well as himself to keep under cover. He reasoned that these men must come from a camp not far away. He had some time before he discovered the enemy, crossed a little creek where there was a small growth of scrub willows and mesaquits, so determined to take the horses back there and tether them, and then seek the camp on foot. White Buffalo was out for big adventure. As he said to himself: "I want to know if I am fit to stand in the lodges of my people, and to lead my fellow-men. More than this, I want to find myself worthy of *Nagos*, the Little Mother," and he would fondly murmur her name, and hum a love song of his own improvising, and feel as if he could do great things for the sake of *Nagos*. But he must hurry, for the two he had slain would be missed, and doubtless search made, and away he ran to venture and risk on his quest for glory. He had not gone many miles when he was sure of the vicinity of a large camp, and, scouting from an eminence, he saw many lodges and also saw a party of horsemen, and as there were a large number of women and

boys following he determined that this was a hunting party. The buffalo were moving north at this time. So White Buffalo said to himself:

"I will run over and watch these people in their hunt. Something may come to me by so doing."

Then with a quick glance over the topography of the country, he was away as swift and as light as a deer. He very well knew that he must not be discovered. To be seen would be fatal to all his purpose. Reaching a knoll from whence to look, he found he was within a short distance of the hunting party. Yonder were the buffalo. Making sure of his rear, he stretched himself to watch the charge. There was one horse which at once took his attention, a large dappled iron gray. This horse fascinated our lone warrior, and he determined to watch him in the run which was about to take place. Soon the hunters were ready, and moved out quickly towards the herd, and in a very little while they were away on the full race, and as White Buffalo keenly watched, he was glad to see the big gray shoot like an arrow from a bow out from the racing horses beside him and easily distance the rest, and to note that before the other horses came up already the rider on the grey had let some arrows fly and made his kill before the other hunters had really begun their hunt.

"Ah!" thought White Buffalo, "if I can secure that horse, it will have been worth my while coming out here alone, and if he is gentle, as I think he is, he will be just the horse for my *Nagos* to own and ride, as we travel from place to place."

Alone in his enemy's country, and far from human help, this valiant soul was for the moment in spirit with his beloved *Nagos* in the lodge far down the continent where the multiple streams and the great forest did flourish. Just then, and when White Buffalo came out of his dream and was face to face with his sublime loneliness, he caught sight of a great wolf looking at him, and again he felt his blood surging through his veins, and his soul as if lifted up, for he was not alone. Here was the visible manifestation of his *Pawakun*, "the spirit of his dreams," watching over him, and as he looked the vision was gone. Then he turned to look out upon the scene before him for an opening wherein to do and dare, and as if in answer to his purpose the rider of the dappled gray, having seen to the straightening out of his kill, and having directed his people to them, was now riding over in the direction of where White Buffalo was stretched. The latter moved into better cover, and saw with profound satisfaction the dapple grey and his rider come slowly out from the hunting field into the range of hills behind one of which he was waiting.

"Just go a little farther from your people, if you will," was the ardent wish of the Cree scout. And carefully and swiftly he crawled and wriggled and ran and dropped behind the big horse and his rider. The latter was carelessly allowing his long lariat, one end of which was also his bridle, to drag as he rode, and in this way was playing right into the hand of his brave



and cunning foe, who was now close beside him. White Buffalo eagerly scanned the hills ahead, and quickly picked upon a spot for the deed he was about to attempt. It came to him as an inspiration to capture this horse without killing his rider. By this time all three—horse, rider and foe—were close to the spot chosen by the latter, who, having taken a couple of arrows from his quiver, and throwing one into position, picked up the end of the lariat and gently pulled the horse around. The astonished Blackfoot sat his horse and looked straight into the face of White Buffalo, who, with bow drawn and arrow pointed, smiled at him. The Blackfoot was taken altogether by surprise, and paled with the immediate presence of death. But White Buffalo signed to him to throw his bow and quiver and knife down, and he, quickly comprehending, did so. Then White Buffalo signed to him to alight from the horse, which he also did. Then White Buffalo, gathering up the bow and quiver and knife, waved his captive over to a position near by, and then, throwing the bow and quiver of his enemy over his own shoulders and sticking the knife in his belt, he mounted the horse, and sending a kind good-bye to the astonished Blackfoot, he rode away. He knew it would be some time before the humiliated warrior-hunter could give the alarm, so he leisurely cantered in an opposite direction to his real course. Then, when well in the hills, he circled to the spot where he had left the horses of his slain. Coming to the place he found the horses and saddles and

everything even as he had left them. Taking stock, he found himself in possession of three horses, one of these a fortune in himself, and all fitted out with saddles and saddle-cloths and lines. He also had the weapons of three of the warriors of the enemies of his people, and the scalp locks of two of them, and as he summed up his effort he felt great satisfaction in having spared the life of the last one. A strong, quick pull of that bow and the sharp arrow would have gone through his heart; but no, it is better, far better, that he is living. Hastily packing the weapons on the back of one horse, and mounting another, and leading the two, he started homeward. As he rode he picked the clean-cropped portions of the country, and every little while doubled on his course, so that anyone seeking to follow him would have more or less trouble to track him and his three horses. He rode, with little intervals for rest and feed, all the evening and night, and when morning dawned was near the big river. And he said to himself:

"I will put the river between me and pursuit before I rest myself or these horses the spirits have given me to possess." Coming to the river, he let his horses cool, and then put all the saddles on the big gray, one on top of the other, and on the top of all this he fastened all his weapon loot, knives and war clubs, etc. Then he fastened the grey to the tail of the horse he was going to swim beside, and the third horse he also fastened in turn to the tail of the gray, and thus arranged he rode his lead horse out into the current. When his

horse lost bottom he slipped to the lower side and swam beside him with the current to the opposite shore. Safely landing, he was glad and thankful, for he was now on the home side of the big river, and a long distance from the scenes of his recent exploits. He felt elated that this test of himself was satisfactory. He was grateful to the spirit of his dreams for timely approbation, and his heart filled within him as he thought of the great good spirit, the Creator, the wonderful Providence, and he sang in joyous thanksgiving as his whole being prompted him to do in his fullness of gratitude. What he had done were the ideals of his race, and he was but going beyond many or most of his fellows in his heroism. And now he sought a screened spot wherein to rest his new-found steeds. And then for himself he looked up a vantage place, whereon to rest as best he could for a few hours before continuing his journey.

These three horses were every one of them prizes. There was *Wepatim*, a splendid square-built brown, and *Wapastim*, a beautiful white pony, and then there was *Kasketawapwam*, the Blackthigh, as his people would undoubtedly christen his dapple gray. Why, he was a glorious prize in himself, well worth travelling hundreds of miles and swimming big rivers and killing men to gain such a horse as this. As White Buffalo watched the graceful animal nibble grass, and look up at him with his big gentle eyes he felt conscious of a great possession, and he pictured the glad day when

he could say to *Nagos*, "He is yours, my beloved," and he saw the wondering gaze of the forest maiden turn to the horse in bewildering astonishment, and then to himself in love and gladness. For hours he lay and watched and could not sleep for joy, all the while busy with his youthful castle-building.

White Buffalo was truly normal. Lung and limb and stomach and liver and brain and heart were sound. He came of pure blood, and none of the complex foods of the white man had as yet disturbed his digestion. One class of food had been the habit of his people for countless generations, and this child of nature was absolutely natural. Nor yet had he lived and slept in stuffy, draughty houses. No shack, with its microbe-burdened air, had taken him in. No, in clean, pure air, in all out of doors, he had dwelt, and was sound and strong. Ten miles an hour for several hours at a stretch would be a common run for such as he. But now he need not run, for yonder are three splendid steeds and he is approaching them, and presently they are saddled and packed and mounted and in the lead, and he is away towards yonder camp which was three nights distant as he now could travel, but which by this time might be farther away. At any rate, he would go as straight as he could for where it had been. Then he could take up the trail.

All this time White Buffalo travelled with great care. He seemed to feel the need of special care all the more as he neared the spot where his people were

camped when he left them last. Leaving his horses in a hidden place he scouted to the old camping ground, and he found that his people had moved easterly and had done so soon after he had started on his trip. Continuing his search, he found fresh tracks of footmen, and this made him keenly alert, and quickly he discovered that a large war party was on the trail of his home camp. This filled him with great anxiety. His mother and father, Snake Skin and all the other people, all this jumped into his mind at once, and more carefully scanning the fresh tracks, he was filled with the hope that he might reach his home camp before the war party.

Running back to his horses, he in his turn took up the trail of the trackers. That same day he passed several old encampments, and noticed that the course was more northerly, and that the tracks of the Blackfeet were quite fresh. He saw that this war party was large, and felt sure that this was a revenge enterprise, which had traced his own party back to the camp of the Crees.

"Ah!" thought he, "if I can reach my people before you do, my brave Blackfoot warriors, we will give you a great welcome."

And the thrill of the coming battle, and this his chance to warn his people, stirred his whole being with firm resolve to hurry on and spare neither himself nor horses to circumvent the foes of his people. Away went our warrior with his heart aflame to rescue his friends, and if possible defeat his enemies. Forever watching, keenly scouting, White Buffalo followed the line of

movement of the big camp, and also that of the Blackfoot war party. He had not gone very far when he discovered one of the rear scouts of this avenging crowd, and was sorely tempted to slay this lone man, who was altogether unconscious of his presence. But his anxiety really was to reach his own camp before these men could make their charge against it. Moreover, he now knew that the main body of the Blackfeet could not be so very far ahead, and, as evening was near, he determined to take stock of them before pushing on towards his own people. Accordingly, he turned aside and sought a good place wherein to cache his horses and outfit. Having done this, he ran out in the early night to where he calculated the main body might be, and in due time he came upon them, secure as they thought, with scouts in advance and in their rear. They never dreamed of a foe almost in their midst. From the quiet clatter of hushed voices and movement, he concluded that their number was large. But he felt confident that there was to be no attack made that night. For this he was thankful, and, running back to his horses, he again rode on, and travelling the most of the night presently he heard a dog bark, and determined to wait for daybreak. As he lay resting, with his horses cropping grass beside him, he could not but hum a song of thanksgiving for thus being brought upon the scene in time to help his people and punish their constant foes. Then he thought of his parents, and was glad to be able to save them from alarm and possible death, and, as was most natural, on

sped his thoughts northward to the big forest country where *Nagos* and her people forever roamed. And for a little space of time he forgot all things else, and thought only of the Little Mother, and revelled in his dream of love.

And now it was coming daylight, and hastily making a toilet, he gathered up the lines of his horses, and, mounting one of them, quietly scouted in the direction of where he had heard the dog bark. Soon he came upon one of his own companions who had been out on guard all night, and who drew his bow at him, but a word sufficed, and with joy his friend ran up and kissed White Buffalo.

"Oh!" said he, "my heart is glad to see you."

And White Buffalo said, "Here, mount this horse, and as we ride tell me the news of camp," and the young fellow gave his budget of happenings since White Buffalo had disappeared, and wound up with the exclamation: "But now there will be great rejoicing in all our camp because of your safe arrival."

Notwithstanding Snake Skin's assurances, and repeated visits to the lodge of White Buffalo's parents, his mother had been much troubled, and her thought was always with her noble boy. In her heart she was forever petitioning the Great Spirit, and all the spirits, on his behalf. And this night she had not slept, but lay and thought of her beloved son, and when the first gleam of coming dawn appeared, she got up, and went out of the lodge, and looked, and looked; and then she

lit the fire in the lodge, and presently she saw two riders and a led horse approaching camp, and her heart stirred within her, and all her strong maternal being spoke and said: "It is my boy! It is my boy!"

Addressing the spirits, she said:—"I thank you; I thank you my son is here."

And the father heard and sprang from his couch, and stood beside his wife, and sure enough here was their boy, alive and well, and with a bound he was beside them, and their joy was full.

To the observing scout who had ridden in with him, and to his parents, and indeed to all who hurried to the spot, it was not necessary to ask, "Where have you been—what has happened?" The scalps spoke, the horses talked, the bows and quivers and war clubs told the tale. And the details could wait.

"White Buffalo, our young chief, has returned, is well; rejoice, oh people!" was the shout that went through the camp. And Snake Skin heard and came on the jump to embrace his hero and much-loved friend. Said he:

"I dreamed of you, I felt you near, and now I am rejoiced to have you again beside me. What can I do, White Buffalo?"

And White Buffalo told him to gather the chief and council and before them he would make his tidings known. The mother set her best food before her boy, soft fat pemmican, and pounded meat, and marrowfat and berries, and all the while she was devouring him



with her mother glances, and touching his shoulder or hair or foot as she moved in her joyful task. The lost was found, and every mother in the large camp sympathized with her, and all were glad for her sake. The boys and girls and children were looking at him, and admiring the horses and saddles and weapons of the Blackfeet which White Buffalo had brought home. Already the young fellow of the morning had fastened the two scalp-locks on a pole, and put this up by the lodge, and all over the camp the people looked and saw them, and hummed snatches of the victory song. Soon Snake Skin was back and said:

"Come, my friend, the gathering is ready." And he and White Buffalo's father went with White Buffalo to the council lodge, where were assembled the chief and head men of the various bands comprising this large camp. And with a sign from the head chief Snake Skin led our warrior to a place of honor, and in silence the big pipe was filled and lit and held aloft before the deity, and pointed to all the cardinal directions, and then the chief smoked and passed it to White Buffalo, and when he had drawn a few puffs, he passed it on and the chief said:

"White Buffalo, we are glad to see you. All the people are rejoiced to have you back with us again, and now we will listen to your message of tidings." And White Buffalo said:

"My friends, the Great Spirit is good to us, for he has brought me home at an opportune time. On the way I have found that this camp was being followed

by a large number of our foes. Last evening, when the night was still young, I saw them and heard them, and they are many, and doubtless their advance scouts are not very far away at this time. I think we have today and tomorrow to prepare, and the second morning will be the time of their charge on us."

There was a solemn hush as the crowd had listened to White Buffalo. And now the chief spoke:

"Truly as you have said, White Buffalo, the spirits are good to us as a people, in thus permitting you to discover our enemies, and now we want you to speak further, and tell us your mind as to what we should do to protect our people and punish our enemies."

Then White Buffalo answered: "I am but a child, let the older men speak."

But the chief said: "No, White Buffalo, we as a people fully recognize that in the conduct of war you have been given much wisdom. Forget your youth, and speak out your mind freely."

Thus encouraged, White Buffalo did say: "Friends, these men I saw last night are no doubt the survivors and friends some of us attacked some moons since. They are thirsting for our blood. Revenge is strong in them. They have prepared for this purpose. They are tracking us to this camp. By good fortune we now know of their coming. Of this our knowledge they do not know. We can prepare for them such a surprise that they and their people will always remember. My mind is, let this camp open lodges and move them

down into the valley of the river which is close by. Let this move be made slowly and in quiet, without hurry or excitement. Let everybody in and out of this camp move as if there was no dread of danger in our minds. At the same time, let every man be ready with his weapons, and while the camp is moving and our scouts watch their approach, we will make our arrangements, and surprise our enemies."

Then the chief, addressing the council and the assembled crowd, said: "What White Buffalo has spoken is good, and we will do this without noise or hurry. We will quietly move camp today, and we will put all the plan of the defence of our camp, and the meeting with our foes, in the hands of White Buffalo, and in all this he must be obeyed."

And the council and the whole crowd shouted their satisfaction, and promised strict obedience. Snake Skin was proud, and glad, that his friend was thus honored. All day and as in ordinary the large camp folded its tents and packed up its belongings, and horses and dogs and humanity, packed and pulled, and the transfer was made down and across the valley. And in regular form the lodges were pitched and camp life went on as usual. Even such would have been the thought of the observer who did not know of the undercurrent of excitement which was in the minds of its people.

White Buffalo's report was not questioned in any way. The Blackfeet were close, and a struggle was coming, and before the night was far spent of this first day

of White Buffalo's arrival several scouts came in with corroborative evidence. A large party of the enemy was within a short day's journey, and moving straight for them. White Buffalo made Snake Skin his second. *Papamotao*, who was the older man, had suggested this to White Buffalo at once, and said:

"I will do whatever you want me to do, but depend on Snake Skin, he is yours to the death."

And White Buffalo's heart was strangely stirred to have these evidences of loyalty. In the meantime, he rested, and then mounting Blackfoot, he carefully reconnoitered the surrounding country and made up his plan of ambush and attack. For he had decided in his own mind that there would be no charge on his camp by the Blackfoot party. He would meet the enemy, and thrust him back, and in doing so destroy as many as he could. That night White Buffalo and Snake Skin and *Papamotao* took stock of their fighting force, and White Buffalo divided these into four equal commands. The chief and older men were to guard the camp. Snake Skin and *Papamotao* were each to command a force and fight on foot; and himself with the other fourth on horseback were to spring upon the rear of the enemy and harass and damage their flight. White Buffalo had located the spot from whence the enemy would come down into the valley, and he planned to have *Papamotao* on one side and Snake Skin on the other and himself with his horsemen meet and chase his foes as these would rush back the way they had come. Early

that night the scouts got word of a multitude close at hand, but this caused no panic in camp, as all believed in the pluck and tact of their leader and his force. Then to help matters, the seer went into a trance, and sent his spirit out to meet the foe, and coming to, he told the waiting and anxious crowd that these were the same men that they had chased and spared this season in the far west, and that now their scalps and blood would be the penalty for their coming into the Cree country, and particularly after this camp wherein White Buffalo dwelt.

"Yes, White Buffalo, I see it clearly coming. Your victory is coming, my son!"

Of course, this helped everybody, for *Kosopachekao* had a good record. They said of him: "He sees beyond." Nevertheless, it was a night of anxiety in every lodge, and many prayers went up from the hearts of mothers and wives and loved ones because of the battle that was at hand. By midnight White Buffalo had all his men placed, and his scouts brought him in the news that his view of the enemy's movements was correct. They were approaching, even as he had planned for them to come.

Because of their numbers, the Blackfeet were bold, and long before daylight they were looking down upon the camp, and as the day star began to appear, they gathered to descend into the valley by way of a coulée or depression which sloped from either side down to the river. When the main body was well into the hollow,

and, as had been previously arranged, Snake Skin howled like a wolf, and was answered by *Papamatao* from the other side of the coulée. Then Snake Skin gave the clear loud war-whoop, and back from across came another great whoop, and the charge was on, and from both slopes down came the Creés. The Blackfeet were thunderstruck with the assault, and vainly fought, and rushed back up the hill. For already answering war-cries were coming from the camp, and they felt the only way was back. But with those who reached the plain there came upon them the charge of White Buffalo, and his horsemen, and the carnage was quick and awful to the Blackfeet. They were taken on every hand, and had it not been that they are such experts at hiding on the plain, there would have been none left alive to carry the news of their defeat to the western camps.

When the fight was over, it was found that the Cree loss was small, only six being killed, and some few slightly wounded. But of their enemies they found over a hundred victims. By noon of this day their-scalp-locks were hanging in the breeze, and on many a triangle all through the camp there hung and dangled the bows and quivers and war clubs and costumes and trinkets of the slain. The chief sent out the word: "Rejoice, oh my people, and be glad! Let every heart be thankful. The Spirits have smiled upon us, and have given to us as a people a worthy son. White Buffalo is his name. And to him we owe our



deliverance today. Let the drums beat, and the dancers come forth, and all the camp sing in honor of our young war chief."

\* And in all this camp, no one was more rejoiced than Snake Skin.

## CHAPTER XI.

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*He Shows His Class as a Runner.*

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**A**S WAS THE MANNER of these nomads, they moved the next day from the scene of the fight, and took their course up along the north bank of the Chain of Lakes River. White Buffalo had now ample opportunity to indulge in his favorite pursuit of hunting. Choice buffalo and elk and antelope, and white and black-tailed deer were his prey. It was the season when all game is prime, and many a fine chase White Buffalo and Snake Skin enjoyed together, for they were even as David and Jonathan in their companionship. Of the horses White Buffalo brought from his last expedition, he gave *Wapastim* to his mother and *Wepatim* to his father, and let the Big Grey run most of the time, to be the admired of all the camp. For had he not already set this beautiful horse aside for a special purpose, one he was forever thinking about? In the meantime, as this camp was moving slowly northward, making provisions, and dressing skins, and renewing lodges, and providing for the daily food of



this multitude, and keeping all hands busy in this work, they fell in with another camp of their own nation, Crees from the Touchwood Hill and Quill Lake region, and the countries to the north and west of these. And now visiting and feasting and war dances and scalp dances, and buffalo and wolf dances were engaged in, and games, such as horse and foot racing, were gone into between these camps. These were friendly contests, though at times an immense amount of betting was indulged in. In the western camp there was a famous long distance runner, and the people of that camp challenged the camp of our hero to produce a man fit to run with him. Snake Skin knew of no one equal to White Buffalo as a runner, and finally succeeded in persuading him to run with the champion. The race was to be a test of speed and endurance. The course was from the large gathering of the lodges of both camps out and around a big hill away in the distance and back. Horsemen were to accompany the runners and see that the race was a fair one. The distance might be from twenty to twenty-five miles; as the Indian would say, "Just a wind-tester." Both sections of this big camp took a lively interest in the race. It was the sole topic of conversation." Snake Skin said to the people of his camp:

"Fear not, if you have anything to place on White Buffalo, do so with a clear heart, he will win, I know." And when the time came, piles of robes and leather, and furs, were carried out onto the hill which was to act

as the grand-stand, and the champion's friends covered these article for article of its kind. And the big good-natured crowd watched the start, and shading their eyes sat and stood and peered across the long course, and because of the distance, lost track of their man, and anxiously wondered which was leading. And all this time Snake Skin was encouraging his friends to bet freely and largely on White Buffalo, and himself led up a horse, and shortly was met by one of the other party with his horse, and soon several other horses were on string in bets, and piles of stuff dotted the hill, and the excitement was at high pitch. The women and girls took part in the fun. Those of White Buffalo's camp brought out bits of finery and articles of apparel, and challenged their friends of the other camp to wager with them. All this time the runners were stretching away for the hill in the distance. And White Buffalo was pushing the champion, and the horses were beginning to feel the strain of the long swinging stride of the speedy men. Ah, that was running indeed. Across plain, and down and up hill, over undulating surface, through patches of herbage, and long grass, no smooth and rolled course had our contestants at that time. It was steady hard work, and only the naturally strong could take part in such a race.

At three-fourths of the way out White Buffalo, having kept behind the champion, as was the proper thing to do, began to shove him. The older runner responded bravely, and the speed was terrific, but White Buffalo

pushed him again, and as he did not move faster, and as now there was a long uphill run, White Buffalo tried the champion and passed him and took his own gait from thence on. And by the time he had turned the hill, he was far in the lead, and running easily and steady and as without effort. Coming in on the home stretch it was as if the race was between the horsemen and the lone footman. In due time, the leading runner was clearly in sight of the crowd.

"Look," said the friends of the hitherto champion. "See, your man is not in sight, and ours is coming like the wind." "Look again," said the forever believing friend, Snake Skin, "look again, does your man run like that man yonder, who is coming faster than the horses?" For the ponies were now dropping behind, and White Buffalo was a quick-moving speck coming on ahead of everybody.

"Look again, oh my friends," said Snake Skin; "we did not send out any sort of a man to run with your champion. We believed you when you claimed you had a great runner in your camp, and so we sent out a great runner against him. See, he is coming fast, our runner, our war chief, our great man, as well as all else. Look now, watch him, as he flies before both horse and man."

And soon it was apparent to all that it was White Buffalo who was running in as if he only now after the long race was catching his wind and gathering up his loins for the run. Fresh horses with both exultant and

anxious riders went out to meet this wonderful man. And with these at swift gallop on either side of him, as he ran lightly and quickly, did he win this great race.

And now the whole camp shouted, winners and losers alike shouted in acclamation, because of White Buffalo's marvellous speed. And his mother smiled, and was truly glad, and his father smoked and was happy, and Snake Skin was beside himself with joy, and the former champion when he came in long after said:

"It is no dishonor to be left by such a man!" "That is right," said his Chief, "we are all Crees and we are all proud of White Buffalo." Then he said: "You have beaten us on foot, but we have some good horses, and we will, if you like, try a horse race." "What you say, my brother, is good," was the answer of the Chief of White Buffalo's camp. "After two nights we will be ready to run our horses with yours."

This was agreed to by all. It was to be a long race, and the whole big moving encampment was truly on a whirl of extra excitement over the coming race.

For centuries in the old world men had grown enthusiastic, and sometimes wild, over horse racing, and here in this new world, where, until a short time since, this noble animal was unknown, already he is the centre of absorbing interest. White Buffalo's horse, Blackfoot, and Snake Skin's Moosehair, were the choice of the one section; and the other picked out *Amikwatim*, a bright

bay, and *Wapastin*, a white horse, as their choice. And for that afternoon and night, and the next day and night, these horses were the object of their owners' care and watching, and also almost the sole topic of conversation in all the camps. On the morning of the third day, everybody was astir early, and as each horse had his friends the betting was fast and furious. Horses, dogs, lodges, pelts, choice garments, trinkets, guns, bows and quivers, were laid in piles. These were covered by corresponding piles, and in the case of the live stock the horses and dogs were stood in line beside those offered in wager against them. In due time the race started. There was no calling back, no false starts, no shams or humbugs; no falderol, and silly wasting of time, as is now so often the case in race starting. What signified a few yards or feet?

"If your horse or man was the real thing, he would make good anywhere." So these men said and did.

Yonder in the distance are two men on horseback. They are stationed some half a mile apart. The race is around them and back to camp. Each section has sent a man and horse out to become the living turning posts, and also watch and check the racers.

White Buffalo and Snake Skin are riding their own horses. Snake Skin had said to White Buffalo:

"I know your horse will leave mine, but if I should come in next to you, then I will be glad, and our portion of the camp will greatly rejoice."

Both the bay and the white were fine-looking horses. White Buffalo as he looked at them was not too sure of the race. However, Blackfoot was in prime condition, and he knew that the old favorite had great staying quality. Yonder they go, four in a bunch as yet. Now they are in full view, and again they disappear in the dip of the valley. The crowd is tense, much is up in wager, but very much more in sectional and tribal relation and prestige. Two large districts are here represented, and the people of these portions of this great West have their special types and characteristics. Here in this gathering, these are in full force, and now all interest is centred on this race. In groups and solitary, all are watching the progress of yonder specks out on the plain. These are changing position fast. Now they begin to string out. They are three-quarters of the way to the first lone horseman. They must turn outside of him, then lead away to the other, always outside as they run. White Buffalo felt Blackfoot under him warming to his work. He was running with great ease, so he let him out a little, this quickened all the horses. But could they stand this long? was the question each rider was asking. Again White Buffalo watched his horse, and saw the little ears turned back just a bit to say: "Let me out some more," and so he did, and now the steady jumps were longer, and only for a short time did the other horses keep the pace, and White Buffalo and his horse felt, "If we can but keep this gait, we will win and no mistake!" Already they were

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some distance ahead, and by the time they turned the first horseman there were a hundred steps between Blackfoot and the nearest horse. As White Buffalo turned, he was glad to note that this was Moosehair, and he sent an encouraging signal to Snake Skin, which was answered with a smile. On across to the next horseman, the jump of Blackfoot was as the tick of a well regulated clock, and his breathing was normal and true, and his rider felt strangely elated, and gave him a gentle pat which the horse was quick to feel, and on they went, this man and horse, as if they were made for each other. There was perfect harmony between them. When White Buffalo leaned with his horse around the living post, he saw that he was a long distance ahead, and that his friend was next. So he said to Blackfoot:

"This is fast enough, my fine old fellow." And Blackfoot answered: "There is plenty more if we need it." The distance was too great for the crowd to distinguish between the horses, and speculation was rife and wild as to who this might be so far ahead. Soon all had made the turns, and the living posts, horses and riders, were following up the race as best they could. Everybody now was on the home stretch. Down the slope, across the valley, up the gently climbing ridge, on thundered the great horse, and White Buffalo felt sure that if he met with no accidents, his horse would win. But Blackfoot was not in doubt. He had plenty of reserve in stock, and was running with care. His master was sitting him as lightly as possible, and yonder

was the camp, and he felt as fresh as ever. Indeed, he was in lung and limb freer than when he started. Now he was in full view of the camp, and his friends were waving him in. Robes were being swung by many an arm. Voices of encouragement were coming to his ear. Blackfoot heard these, and said: "Just let me go, and we will show these strange people how we can run." "As you please, my good horse," was the answer, and Blackfoot cleared his lungs and spurted into camp many arrow-shots ahead. And when White Buffalo threw himself from his horse, he looked and saw with pride that Moosehair was coming next. Blackfoot and Moosehair had won this long race. The Chief of the other camp shouted out the fact in his own way. Said he:

"Oh, my people, again are we beaten! Our friends have better men and horses than we have. Let us be thankful that we are all Crees, and be proud together, ~~that among our people are such men and such horses.~~ Some day the spirits will smile on us, and ~~then we will~~ win back from our friends all we have lost." White Buffalo was proud for the sake of *Nagos*, for her he had run his best, for her he had ridden for victory. Snake Skin was gloriously glad. His friend had won, and he had come next. All their camp rejoiced with them, and White Buffalo and Blackfoot were in everybody's thought and talk for days after this great race.



## CHAPTER XII.

*Nagos Becomes Queen of His Lodge.*

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**S**HORTLY after this these camps separated, and that of White Buffalo went eastward and north into its own country. Autumn was approaching, and the next moon would be the time when White Buffalo would go north, and hoped to meet the North Wind Maker and claim *Nagos* as his bride. Snake Skin was rejoicing for his friend's sake. Often, when on the hunt, he would pretend to call his friend back to the present. "Do not let your spirit wander so far away, my friend. Stay with us now, I beseech you. Let us hunt the elk today, and tomorrow the moose, and by and by, in due time, we will go north into the homeland of the Little Mother," and humming a love song, he would say: "Oh, *Nagos*, the beautiful, our Little Mother, the good, wait a while and let White Buffalo remain with us, his own people. The days and the nights will soon pass and he will be all yours." And thus bantering his much-loved friend, Snake Skin himself was anxiously waiting the time when once more he would accompany White Buffalo over the divide and down

into the forest land of the north. Secretly but continuously, White Buffalo was preparing for his journey. Indeed, he had been doing this in thought and deed all these moons, trying himself, testing himself, and in measure he was satisfied. Neither heart nor nerve nor head, nor yet physical strength had failed him in his trying moments. For all this he was thankful, and in all he had undertaken he was profoundly grateful to have had the manifestation and evident approval of his *Pawakun*, the spirit of his dream. And now, with all he had gone through at his back, and thoroughly won into his life, he felt that he could creditably go into the presence of his beloved, and claim her from her parents and people.

Blushingly he told his mother that in a few nights he was going away, and when he came back he hoped to bring her another child to love; and his mother answered: "If she is worthy of you, my son, she shall have a big place in my heart."

The day came, and White Buffalo and Snake Skin were ready, and with the Big Grey richly caprisoned, and two ordinary ponies for to ride at times, our travellers took their course into the north country. White Buffalo's mother sent to *Nagos* a beautiful robe, with a belt of bead work across it. She had dressed and worked the robe while her son was away on one of his war expeditions, and now brought it forth, and gladdened his heart with this expression of her motherly thoughtfulness. She said:

"My heart goes with you, my son, and may you find her you long for in health and happiness awaiting your coming." Snake Skin was jubilant for his friend's sake, and gayly sang as they travelled. Now it was a war song, now one of thanksgiving, and again he broke out into ardent strains of love, and White Buffalo's heart responded to his comrade's spirit, and in bright hopes they kept on their way towards the star that never moves. Snake Skin was never happier than when he was with his leader, and to be his confidant and bosom companion was to him supreme satisfaction, and now to be the chosen ally in this romantic and delightful embassy gave him great joy. As usual, our travellers were not burdened with a provision outfit. They were both good hunters, and in this White Buffalo was more than ordinary. With bow and quiver and snare, they foraged and feasted as they journeyed. Having the horses with them, they could not travel as direct as on foot, and it was not until the fourth day they came in view of the arranged spot of meeting with the North Wind Maker and his camp. White Buffalo, the brave, cool hunter, and warrior and scout, whose nerves were like fine steel, whose experience had been to fear neither men nor beasts, was now trembling with excitement, as he and his comrade reached the height from which the smoke of the camp might be seen. He was strongly moved, and both eagerly scanned the forest land for some sign of human life.

Presently White Buffalo saw a faint, hazy smoke, and pointed it out to his companion, and his eyes shone as he looked into Snake Skin's, and Snake Skin answered: "She is there, my friend, and soon you will behold her."

Even then White Buffalo knew that *Nagos* was seeking him in spirit and he answered: "I am coming, my beloved, I am coming."

Away down in the valley the maiden was busy with her work, but every little while she lifted her eyes, and sent her glance outward, and said to herself: "He is coming; White Buffalo is coming."

"*Nagos*, you will burn those skins if you are not more careful," was her mother's gentle admonition, and the girl's spirit came back to the work of smoking the skins she had in hand. But she was rejoicing in heart, for her lover was near.

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These were the days when as yet the telegraph and telephone and the monthly and weekly and daily mails had not been thought of among these people, and therefore the spiritual sense had not become so dense as when these inventions came to abound. To see afar, to hear from the distance, to feel the approach of either friend or foe, and to distinguish between these were the frequent experiences of these nomadic tribes.

"Sure enough, they have arrived! He has come!" These are the exclamations from the people of North Wind Maker's camp. This, at this time, is not the lone lodge of the previous summer, but a group of lodges.

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The friends of the North Wind Maker and his family were here to see for themselves this wonderful Cree from the south country, and to judge if he were worthy to mate with their *Nagos*. Here they were, these fine stalwart young men, White Buffalo and Snake Skin, and keenly were they watched and weighed and not found wanting. And their horses were objects of profound interest. These great "big dogs" were new animals to canoe and dog train people. The docility of the horses, the beauty and bigness of the gray, were greatly admired by the whole camp, and when Snake Skin led the grey up, and said to *Nagos*, "Come and speak to your own horse, come and see how kind and friendly he is," and she blushed, and stepping up patted the big fellow and he seemed to know that here was his mistress, and then Snake Skin remarked:

"Why, he knows you already, *Nagos*. White Buffalo has told him so often about you, the Little Mother, he knows you as his friend." And *Nagos* blushed all the more, and put her arm over the grey's neck, and talked to him in her own sweet way, and the most happy, and yet withal the most embarrassed fellow in all the camp at this time was our hero, White Buffalo.

The North Wind Maker welcomed the young men into his lodge, and his wife and himself made them feel at home.

"You are true to your word, young man," was his greeting to White Buffalo, and to Snake Skin he said:

"We are glad to see you again, and will rejoice to have you tell us all about your country and people, since you were with us last winter."

Truly, here was a field in which Snake Skin could glorify his friend, and thus having a free hand he made good use of it, and those northern peoples listened to his vivid descriptions of life on the plains, and the great war expeditions, and the lone trip of his friend, and how White Buffalo had saved their home camp, and what took place at the races. Snake Skin was endowed by nature with memory and perception and language, and here was his chance of an admiring audience and a most interested congregation.

Thus Snake Skin moved in and out of these moose-skin lodges and won the friendship of these northern people for his friend and himself. And it was while doing this his quick glance fell on a maiden who to him was a surprise, and a glorious revelation, and he said to himself: "Ah, she is wonderful, and touches my heart as no woman has ever done. Who is she, where does she come from? Let me find out."

And thus communing, and with stirred interest, Snake Skin went to *Nagos*, and in his own way found out from her that this was *Achakosis*, the Little Star, and that her father was a younger brother of the North Wind Maker, and she was the cousin, or in this case the younger sister of *Nagos*, the children of brothers being considered as of one family by these Cree peoples.

"My little sister is good, and we all love her," said Nagos to Snake Skin; and while he did not say so, he thought, "And I am also getting to love her." And he began to feel even as his friend had felt twelve or thirteen moons ago on this very spot. Presently Nagos woke up to Snake Skin's thought, and with a smile said to him, "The Little Star is very bright," and he quickly answered:

"You will help me, *Nagos*," and she said, "You need no help," but he knew that he had a friend.

That night the North Wind Maker said to White Buffalo: "I know where there are some moose, and I would be glad if you would go with me tomorrow to hunt them." The older man had somewhat to say to the younger, and thus desired the opportunity to speak his mind.

White Buffalo cheerfully assenting, it was arranged for the hunt the next day. There were many peculiar feelings stirring the hearts and minds of the inmates of this lodge that night. The father and mother were now face to face with the very hard trial of parting with their dearly-loved daughter. During the summers and winters of her childhood and growing maidenhood, she had been as the apple of their eye, and now the man of her choice had come to claim her at their hands, to take her far away into a strange land, one of war and bloodshed. But they had given their word, and it was plainly evident that their daughter had given her heart to this man. And truly he was a choice man. This

they could see for themselves, and it must be done, this parting with *Nagos*. But oh, it filled their hearts with sorrow to think of it. And *Nagos*, she was alternating between great joy and sorrow. But she had to confess to herself the joy predominated. He had come, he was here, the one she had been thinking of, and dreaming of, and sighing for, was now here, and had come to claim her as his own. She loved her parents and brother much, very much, but she loved White Buffalo more. She was willing to go with him anywhere; she felt she belonged to him, and he was hers. She knew that his heart was hers, and a rich sense of possession filled her whole being with a great healthy joy.

And our hero was beside himself with happiness. *Nagos* was well; *Nagos* was more beautiful than ever. *Nagos* had made him feel that he was very welcome. A few words had passed between them. He had given her the robe his mother had sent her. He had made her a present of the Blackthigh, the big grey. She had thanked him sweetly and looked into his eyes for once, and he saw her heart was his. And thus he lay beside Snake Skin and was full of thankfulness. He wondered and speculated on what the North Wind Maker might have to say to him on the morrow. But he had no fear of losing *Nagos*; no, his faith in this was sublime. The moons had come and gone, and his love for *Nagos* was manifold stronger, richer, truer now than ever. He had tested himself and was satisfied.



And Snake Skin beside him was glad, supremely glad for his friend's sake. He had a part in this good work of securing a queen for his hero's lodge and life. He knew that all their camp would rejoice when they saw *Nagos*. And, moreover, his own heart was keenly touched for he had seen the Little Star, and the halo of her presence was with him now. And the morning came, and the hunters started, and Snake Skin sought to cultivate the people of the camp, and to watch for and if possible become acquainted with the beautiful Little Star. In this matter during the day *Nagos* helped him, and arranged that Snake Skin bring up the Big Grey, and she would invite her sister to come and see him. Thus she kindly played into Snake Skin's hands, and gave him opportunity in her own way to talk to the Little Star and interest her in horses and buffalo and the strange country and the distinct life of his people. All this time he was drinking in her charm and grace, and saying to himself:

"She shall be mine; even if I have to wait many moons and travel long distances, she shall be mine."

And *Nagos* watched and thought that in due time her little sister might come south also, even as she was going south.

Away out on the hunt, things were also moving. The hunters had not gone very far when they came upon the track of a large buck moose. These were now in their prime. White Buffalo suggested to the North Wind Maker that the older man take his course for a

certain ridge in sight, and he would go on the track of the moose. "For," said he, "when I start him, that is where he will run to." The older man was struck with the younger man's knowledge, and felt that White Buffalo was wise in hunting lore. In the meantime the young hunter had bounded away on the bull's track, and as he had expected, because of the dense thicket, started his game without being able to fire an arrow. Then the chase began, and so hard did he press the huge brute that by the time they were rising the summit of the ridge he was close upon the moose, and coming to a clearer space he got his chance to send an arrow into the big fellow. This slowed him up, and White Buffalo sent another which finished him, and the elder man coming to the ridge saw the track and soon was in at the kill. Here, again, he was astonished at the shortness of the run, for generally it took the swiftest runner a long stern chase to run down a bull moose. Surely this was no ordinary man who had come wooing his daughter. And now as they skinned the monster and cut up the meat, North Wind Maker had his opportunity to talk to White Buffalo. Said he:

"Young man, at this time last summer, we had not seen you; we did not know such a man as you lived. Then you found us, and when you returned to your own people, you took our daughter's love with you. Her mother and myself saw this, but we did not know you, and thought perhaps you might never come again. Then you came with your friend in the winter

to our camp still further distant, and we knew you were in earnest, and having watched our daughter we also knew that you were always in her thoughts. So I said to you that if neither of you changed your minds, and you again came to us at this time of the season into this part of the country, we would give you our daughter to wife. You have come even as you said you would. Now I want you to promise me two things: One is that you will always treat my daughter kindly. She is good and very kind herself, and we want to think of her as your wife, the mistress of your lodge, and being kindly treated and loved by you. The other is, that for some seasons you will bring her to meet us at this point, so that we may see her and you, for we are old, and do not think of ever going out to your country. Will you promise me these two things, young man?"

Then White Buffalo did answer:

"My friend, what you ask of me is easy for me, if I live, to do. I love your daughter with all my heart. We were made for each other. I did not know where I was going, or to whom I was coming, when I found you and your daughter last season. I was led as by the hand, and when I saw your wife and your daughter, and listened to them talking, then I knew why I had been brought to your camp in this distant part which I had never seen. My heart went out to *Nagos*, and my whole being was glad, and when you told me that when I came here at this time you would give me your

daughter as my wife, I rejoiced with all my soul, and ever since I have been striving to make myself fit to be her husband. Yes, I will always do as you wish, and treat *Nagos* kindly. This will truly be easy, for I love her with all my heart. The other matter you ask is also easy. We will come here at this season of the year to meet you and your wife and friends. This will be a pleasure for us, and we will look forward to our coming here. Perhaps my father and mother may come with us, for I would like them to meet you." Then the elder man answered:

"I believe you, my friend, and now with a good heart, though sorrowing, we will give you our daughter, and may the Great Good Spirit bless your union."

Carefully putting the meat away, and preparing two light packs of the nose and briskit and entrails, they returned to camp, the North Wind Maker having secured the assurances he wanted, and also having further proof of this man who sought to be his son-in-law. And White Buffalo, now feeling secure of his object, and having the parent's assurance that the daughter loved him. No wonder that on beholding *Nagos* he looked upon her with a sense of gratified proprietorship, and *Nagos* in turn had been told so much about her lover during this day that she said to her heart: "Be still, he is yours; White Buffalo is mine." Thus she looked upon him with great pride, and no wonder, for he was already, though so young, a great hunter, a brave warrior, and a true patriot, and withal a good

man. According to his environment, he was a splendid man, physically, mentally and spiritually he was more, far more than ordinary. Then, *Nagos*, you do well to dearly appreciate White Buffalo.

On the other hand, he felt that all this paled in the presence of his beloved. She was really and truly his queen.

That afternoon and evening the North Wind Maker made a feast, the meat of moose, and elk, and caribou, and the fat of the bear and beaver, pounded meat and marrow-fat, and dried berries and moose nose, and beaver tail. This was the bill of fare. All partook and were happy. Then in the midst of the festivity the North Wind Maker addressed the crowd and spoke as follows:

"My friends, some thirteen moons since my family and myself were camped in this place, and one day there appeared a stranger in our midst. We were astonished at his presence. He came alone and almost at once we loved him. We did not know who he was, but our hearts went out to this young stranger. The next day he was gone. Again while the strong winter moon was shining he came with his companion and friend, and hunted us up in our camp away north of the mouth of the big Saskatchewan. We were glad to see these young men, for somehow we had been looking for the coming of the strange guest who had been in our camp in the autumn. We knew our daughter's heart had followed him away, and we felt the times when her spirit

was travelling with him in the far southern country. And while glad to see him come again, we were not surprised. At that time he saved my life, and revealed himself to us as a great hunter, and a very brave man, and when he asked me for our *Nagos*, our much-loved daughter, I told him, I the North Wind Maker, who have always kept my word, I told him that if his mind changed not and he came here at this time of the season, we would give him our daughter *Nagos* to wife. He said he would be here if alive. He is here, and now we will do even as we promised and give him *Nagos*."

And the crowd of relatives and friends answered: "Yes, this is fitting. *Nagos*, the Little Mother, is altogether worthy of such a man. May they both live long, and be much blessed!"

Such was the marriage of White Buffalo and *Nagos*. No church nor priest, no bridesmaids nor costly pomp nor ceremony. The blessing of their parents, and the assurance of their own hearts, and they were man and wife. No bells rang out, but the birds sang, and the forest animals gambolled and mated, and the leaves tinted and the waters of the stream rippled, and the earth was glad. And Snake Skin sang and danced, and greatly rejoiced in his friend's pure happiness. He improvised and sang:

The north and the south have come together,  
White Buffalo and *Nagos* have met each other,  
Hi-he-ya ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

The north wind and the south wind are mingling,  
The plains people and the lake people are singing  
Hi-he-ya ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

We are one, we are one, and the Great Spirit  
smiles.

Hi-he-ya ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

All the people very soon caught onto his thought and sang with him, and White Buaffalo and *Nagos* in the quiet of the North Wind Maker's lodge held each other's hands and sat and communed, and were full of the greatness of earthly joy.

A few days were spent in hunting and feasting, and becoming better acquainted, and now the time came for the parting.

The wily Snake Skin had won over the young brother of *Nagos* to accompany them south. "For," said he, "I will come with you to seek your people, when the winter is here." Every day had made him to feel that the Little Star was in this case the brightest and best in his firmament, and if possible he would win her. He had a good friend in *Nagos*, who warmly appreciated his ardent true friendship for her beloved White Buffalo. The brother who was to accompany our party on its homeward journey was named *Niska*, the Goose, he having come in the late autumn when the fowl were taking their southern flight. And his mother said, let us call him the Goose, for he has come with them out of the north. *Niska* was eager for this trip to the unknown, and then he knew it would not be for a long time anyway, for he saw through the purpose of Snake Skin.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## On His Wedding Journey.

**A**ND NOW NAGOS mounts to the back of the grey, and the other two ponies are packed with a bran new moose skin lodge, and some choice forest provisions, and with the three young men on foot, and amid the quiet benedictions of parents and friends, Nagos turned her back on all her past. And in this she was even doing as the daughters of Eve have done from the beginning—leaving father and mother, and cleaving unto her husband.

She alone of this little party was in measure sad, but she remembered that her lover-husband had promised to bring her again to the camp of her people within the circle of the moons. And she fully trusted him. White Buffalo was proud and intensely happy. He had won the great prize he set before him, and his queen, *Nagos*, was going with him to the lodges of his people. Snake Skin was full of hope. He believed the Little Star looked upon him with favor, and *Niska* was glad to go with his sister and see for himself and his friends the camps of the plain warriors and hunters in the new country.



Simultaneous with their departure, the northern Crees struck camp, and loading their canoes embarked for the lower levels of lake and river. The North Wind Maker sang the songs of his youth to cheer his own heart, but more so that of the faithful wife and mother, who could not but shed some tears as she paddled in her place in the swift moving birch canoe. Her only daughter, and such a child as *Nagos*, had gone out of her home, and while she was proud of the alliance with one so noble as White Buffalo, still her heart was sad. And then her boy—what dangers was he going into? What risks would he run? But she was praying for her children: "Oh, Great Good Spirit, and ye spirits all, pity and bless my children." This was the burden of her cry as the little flotilla swept down the ripples and rapids, and around the bends of the smaller stream, on and on into the larger river. When the wedding party reached the summit from whence White Buffalo had seen the smoke of the lone lodge, which had been the home of the object of his quest on his first journey north, he stayed his party, and standing and holding the hand of *Nagos*, he told her how he was surely led to find her as his mate, and how his heart had stirred within him as he had stood on this spot alone thirteen moons since. And she looked into his eyes, and saw his soul, and her great love and trust were more than satisfied. Just then Niska drew attention to an object which was silently looking at them from another point on the ridge, and behold, there was a great large

wolf, and Snake Skin knew, and White Buffalo knew, that the spirit of his dream, his *Pawakun*, was with him truly in this his wedding trip, and he pressed the hand of *Nagos* and vowed within his heart eternal faithfulness.

Snake Skin said within himself: "Surely my friend is blessed above many," and the boy *Niska* wondered at the hush that came over these older men. Then *Nagos* turned and cast her eye away down the valley of the stream, and fain would have sent her spirit forth to comfort her parents. But no, her spirit would not leave the presence of her lord.

In silence and in joy they travelled down the slope which was their course. Perhaps there is no part of this great continent where the seasons are as intense as they are in Canada's great Northwest. Forever recurrent, forever at work doing their part, there is no monotony in the years, winter, spring, summer, autumn; and life is always fresh. Such are the conditions of Canada's great west land. Now it is autumn, rich and glorious, and our travellers are revelling in the beauty and harmony of the scene. To *Nagos* this was a new world. Far away stretches of hill and valley, and forest and plain were coming in view from every vantage point. And now the grasses and herbage were ripe, and the tints were full, and the whole land on every side was gorgeous. This was a wonderful and fitting bridal trip. Nature magnificent, on every hand, and these most appreciative children of nature were basking in

the wholesome sunshine thereof. There were no showers of rice, no flinging of old slippers over bridal costumes; nor were there any smiling and smirking and giggling and jesting fellow-travellers. Moreover, there were no transport employees making rude remarks because of the newly wedded couple. Nay, with these all was joy and happiness, and this rich environment was of the Great Spirit's goodness. And as his children they were accepting his gifts with reverence and gratitude.

Arranging as to where they should camp, Snake Skin and *Niska* ran on to do some hunting and also make preparations for camp, and White Buffalo and *Nagos* followed up with the horses. As they journeyed they conversed. Said *Nagos*:

"Are women so few in your south country that you and your friend had to come away out here to look for them?" And he answered:

"Women like you, my *Nagos*, are few." And she said: "Perhaps men like you are hard to satisfy." "Yes," said White Buffalo, "but now I am satisfied, for I have you, and am taking you away to my lodge and people."

"Yes," she answered, "and I am truly willing to go, for all through these moons since I first saw you I have wanted to be with you." And he said: "It makes my heart glad to hear you thus speak, and I hope that you will always feel this way, and I pledge you my life that I will do my part to have you love me more





*The Taking Home of Nagos*

and more even as the Great Spirit may give us life to dwell together." "Oh, my man, I love you with all my heart now," said the Little Mother, and White Buffalo was moving closer up beside the big grey to be near his *Nagos*, when suddenly there came a clear distinct shout upon their ears, and *Nagos* said: "That is *Niska*, something is wrong. Let us hurry!—Let us hurry!" And the Little Mother let the grey move as fast as he could considering the underbrush and forest, and White Buffalo sent the ponies after her at a good pace.

Very soon they came out into a small opening, and saw near the centre of this, where there stood a few scattered poplar trees, a stirring sight. Here was a group of bears, a great big she-bear and her cubs, and two large male bears, and on the ground and under the bunch of bears there lying as dead was Snake Skin, and perched up in one of the trees was *Niska*. The latter pantomined to them, and White Buffalo at once understood that the boy's weapons were gone, and sending *Nagos* back with the horses to be under cover, he sprang his bow and pulled some arrows from his quiver, and rushed to the rescue. The bears were so taken up with the man on the ground and the other in the tree that they did not know of his approach until one of the big males squealed with pain as the sharp arrow entered his vitals. And before they saw the newcomer another arrow struck the second big male bear. Then the female and cubs saw White Buffalo, and the old

one rushed at him, but he, always cool, ran from her a little way in order to give *Niska* a chance to recover his bow if not broken. Then he suddenly turned and shot the bear as she was coming for him with all speed. The arrow stayed her course and gave White Buffalo time to pull another, and with this he stopped her run altogether. Then he hurried over to the scene of the fight, where already *Niska* was down beside the prostrate form of Snake Skin. By this time all the old bears were dead, and the cubs were whining and moving around the mother bear and wondering what had happened. Then *Nagos*, who had keenly watched the battle, came up with the horses, and White Buffalo waved her over to the side of the opening the breeze was from in order that the horses might not be frightened, as was often the case when they scented any of the bear species. He also ran over and helped *Nagos* dismount, and he fastened the horses, and then all were on the spot where Snake Skin lay as if dead.

But White Buffalo soon found that his friend still lived, though unconscious, and remembering that they had passed a stream of water a little way back, dispatched *Niska* for some, and in the meanwhile sought to find what was the matter, and discovered that except for a few scratches there were no serious wounds on the body or limbs of Snake Skin. Then while both *Nagos* and White Buffalo rubbed and worked and raised their friend and longed for some return of consciousness, he began to breathe more freely and presently opened

his eyes and wondered where he was. Then he saw *Nagos* and smiled, and she was so glad that she kissed her husband's friend, and White Buffalo laughed and said: "Now he will surely live. My friend will live!"

And *Niska*, running up with the cold spring water, he drank some and *Nagos* bathed his head, and in a little while he sat up and was himself again. Then there was great joy in all their hearts. Their little party was still intact. "These bears are fat; these skins are good. We will camp here," said White Buffalo, and soon the lodge was set, and the rest of the day and the following also were spent in drying and smoking the fat of the bears, and in stretching and fleshing and drying the bear skins. *Niska* had killed the cubs, thus none had escaped.

When the day was spent, and they were sitting around the cheerful fire in the lodge, *Nagos* said:

"Come, now, tell us what happened. We saw you, Snake Skin, stretched on the ground, and you *Niska*, away up a tree. Now tell us what took place before my husband and myself came in sight."

"Yes," said White Buffalo, whose whole being had thrilled when he heard *Nagos* say for the first time "my husband," "do tell us about it." Then Snake Skin turned to *Niska* and said: "You saw more than I did, you were up the tree. You go on and tell us what you saw."



"Yes," replied *Nagos*, "when I saw him up the tree, though I was much frightened, yet I thought my brother is more like a squirrel than a goose. Both are great to make noise. Let him tell what he saw, and what sent him up the tree."

And *Niska* laughed, and said he was thankful there was a tree to climb into, and he had no doubt other people would climb just as quick, as he did if they had been chased as he was. Then he gave his version of the fracas.

"We were running, Snake Skin was ahead, and we had not seen a fresh track, though there were plenty of yesterday's and older, when suddenly we came into the company of bears, and before we could draw our arrows they were upon us. I think they had been fighting among themselves and were already mad when they saw us, for the whole crowd came upon us in a jump, and one of them knocked my bow out of my hand quicker than any man could do it, and was going to clasp me in his arms, when I dodged and sprang from him, and ran for the tree, and just missed being pulled down by the same fellow. Then when I got high enough I looked around and saw Snake Skin being squeezed by the biggest bear of the lot. It was then I called for you to hear. Snake Skin's bow was not in his hands and he was wrestling with the big bear. Then the one that chased me up the tree went at his fellow-bear, and presently Snake Skin and the two bears were all in a heap and then they tumbled, and I saw

Snake Skin under, and I said 'he is killed,' for he lay as one dead. From where I was I could not see him breathe, and the two bears got up and went at each other, and struggled and wrestled, and at last one downed the other, and they both were out of breath and were quietly resting when you came in sight. Say, *Nagos*, your man is a wonderful shot with bow and arrow. My, he must have a strong arm! The arrow went almost through that big bear, and when the other bear rushed at him he shot him twice so quick I was astonished. I tell you, *Nagos*, my sister, you must never anger White Buffalo. He is a terrible man," and *Nagos* looked at White Buffalo beside her, and said quietly:

"I am not afraid. Don't you know his strength is my strength, why should I fear my man?" And White Buffalo sat and drank in all this from *Nagos*, for it was as sweet incense to his soul.

And now Snake Skin spoke up: "Yes, *Nagos*, what you say is true. Your man is yours for life. I know him to be both brave and good, you need not fear him. He should have killed me long ago, for my foolish wickedness, but instead he always forgave me, and has now saved my life several times from men and beasts. And you, *Niska*, be proud you are related to one so brave and strong, and withal so good."

Then White Buffalo interjected: "Go slow, my friend, you know your tongue is prone to travel fast.



I am not the only brave and good man. And my heart jumps with gladness that I was again permitted to come to the help of so true a friend as you are. So now go on with your story of the fight with the bears today."

"Well," said Snake Skin, "I have hardly got my breath back, but if I must tell what I saw, here goes. We were running, *Niska* and I, and without a sound or warning we were on the bears, and almost as quickly they were on us, and as I could not draw an arrow I flung my bow from me, and had not time to pull my knife when one of the bears had me in his clasp, and then the other big bear was up beside me, and down we went, and whether it was the awful squeeze or the tumble with the bears on top I do not know, I was gone asleep and did not know any more until I saw you and *Nagos* working with me, and I felt as if I had come back from a long journey, and here were you and *Nagos* beside me, and all the bears dead. And I said to myself: 'It is my friend, White Buffalo. He has done this, and again I owe him my life.'"


"Well, well," said *Nagos*, "for you Snake Skin, your story is very short. That bear certainly squeezed the breath out of you, and we must let you rest on this journey in order that you may recover. I saw more than you did, but I will not tell my story now, it might make some of you too proud, but let us all thank the Good Spirit for life and all good things."

Then White Buffalo trilled off one of his thanksgiving songs, and the others joined in the chorus, and all were truly grateful. *Nagos* and her man were supremely happy.

The next day, while *Nagos* and White Buffalo were busy with the meat and fat and skins, and Snake Skin lounged and rested, and drew long breaths in order to feel his lungs come back in place after the terrible squeeze of yesterday, *Niska* ran out and in a very short time shot a black-tail deer, and here was another skin and more meat to look after. And all were kept busy in the work of stretching and drying skins and curing the meat and fat of the bears, and making stagings whereon to dry the meat and stretch the skins, and keeping slow fires under these. And thus there was plenty to do.

The following day they moved camp. The two ponies were well packed, and Snake Skin was mounted on the big grey, for, protest as he would, *Nagos* would make him take her place on horseback. And really he was not fit to walk. The big bear had given him a mighty hug, and it would take some time for him to come back to the normal. They made but a short day's journey.

"Snake Skin must rest," said *Nagos*, and White Buffalo said, "Why hurry?" For to him this was Paradise, and his soul was resting. He had *Nagos*, and she was both wife, and home, and all things to this ardent lover and husband.



They camped on the bank of a little stream, and a short distance from them was a beaver dam, and every little while they could hear the loud sounding flops of these creatures, as they dove and played in their strongly-made pond. And when the moose-hide lodge was set, and the stagings up, and the meat and skins hung out to dry, and the supper over, White Buffalo told how he had been sitting on a beaver path at one time, watching the pond for a favorable chance to shoot, and never dreaming of anything behind him, when suddenly he heard a movement just at his back. And before he could turn out of the way, a great big old beaver came thump up against him, and for the time being he felt like Snake Skin must have felt the other day, for he seemed as if the wind was knocked out of him. And on rushed the beaver and dove into the pond with a big splash. And White Buffalo said that both he and the beaver were very much frightened.

"Frightened, did you say?" said Snake Skin. "I do not think you were ever frightened."

"Oh, yes, I have been frightened many times," answered White Buffalo. "Why, sometimes during the winters and summers that have passed I was often frightened at the thought that I would have to kill you."

"I do not wonder at that," said Snake Skin, "I now often wonder that you did not knock me on the head or send an arrow through me as I deserved you should."

"Then," continued White Buffalo, looking with intense affection at *Nagos*, "how often have I felt fear during these last few moons that I might not be able to secure this Little Mother beside me. Terrible fear at times, which would cloud my days, and make my heart very sore. But now—" and he laughed in joy.

And *Nagos* blushed and all joined in the merry laugh of White Buffalo.

Then *Nagos* said: "Talking about beaver, I had two young beavers as my pets for a whole summer, and I loved them, they were so cute and playful. In the fall I heard my father say something about killing them, and I slipped away with them one day, when we were camped like we are tonight, near to a pond, and put them into it, and when father missed the young beavers I told him, and he laughed, and called me a little soft heart. But he did not scold."

"Yes," said *Niska*, "I got all the scolding in our lodge. *Nagos* never was scolded. She could do what she liked, and it was all right with father and mother. I remember those beaver kittens. They were pretty and cunning, and forever in mischief, and *Nagos* spent a great deal of time playing with them and talking to them as if they were people."

Just then there came the sound of a big splash in the pond, but White Buffalo answered:

"I am not hunting beaver just now. I am too busy taking my wife home," and *Nagos* laughingly answered: "Yes, that is very hard work for White

Buffalo, to have his wife to look after and carry home to his own lodge. Poor fellow! And you, Snake Skin, you also are going to have the same trouble by and by with the Little Star, if you are not more careful."

"Yes," said Snake Skin, "now I see the great misfortune of White Buffalo, I must be more careful, and not run into like troubles."

Then *Niska* laughed and said: "I am afraid you are already in big trouble, for I heard you when you were asleep last night talking about a star."

Then they all laughed, and *Nagos* remarked that she was growing anxious about how she might be received in the southern camp, and White Buffalo assured her that her welcome in his mother's heart would be genuine. And Snake Skin said:

"All our people will welcome you as our young chief's wife. They will be glad to have you come among them for White Buffalo's sake and for your own sake, *Nagos*, they will rejoice," and thus assured *Nagos* was much comforted.

Slowly our party moved south. *Niska* and *Nagos* were filled with wonderment at the stretches of prairie they came into, and listened with some dawning of comprehension to Snake Skin's account of the great plains, interminable and beyond. He was steadily recovering from his tussle with the bears. And *Nagos* said, when his breathing became easier, so did his tongue move freer.

When within a couple of days of easy march of where they hoped to find their people, they came upon *Papamotao* and his family, who had branched out from the others for a side trip of hunting and trapping. Here *Nagos* for the first time came into association with the women of the southern camp, and was delighted with the welcome they gave to her. The Traveller's wife acted a mother's part at once, and made her feel right at home, and the girls of the lodge showed her every kindness, and accorded to her marked attention. She spoke of them to Snake Skin, and his answer was:

"Are you not our young chief's wife? If he loves you then all our people will love you also. Then they are not blind or thoughtless, they see you, and will love you for your own sake. Oh, *Nagos*, you need not fear our people. The little children and the grandparents, and all the camp will be your true friends."

*Papamotao* gave her a general welcome. Said he: "We did wonder where White Buffalo had gone to. Who had he found? To whom was his spirit forever wandering all through these many moons? Some of us suspected it was even as it has turned out to be. But neither he nor Snake Skin ever told anyone about the people of the north. I alone in our camp had seen some of them when I went on the long journey down to the big water. But I did not see your people, my daughter. All we could do was to believe in White Buffalo. We knew him, we felt he would do right,



and now we are sure he has done so, for we behold you, his choice, coming with your brother into the camps of our people, and surely into our hearts as well. We wish for you and your husband great happiness. Truly you are welcome as the wife of White Buffalo."

Thus *Papamotao* spoke to *Nagos*, and then turning to White Buffalo, he said:

"Young man, keep on as you have begun. Follow the best in you. Surely someone led you out to hunt and find this good woman you have brought home as your wife, and whom we cannot help but give our hearts to for her own sake as well as for yours. Then I say to you, keep on always listening to the good, having your ears and mind open to the spirits, who will lead you in paths of prosperity and happiness."

And White Buffalo answered: "Your words and actions make me abundantly glad, my wise friend, and your counsel I will take to my heart, and seek to follow. As you say, I was led out into the unknown to me and my people, and there I found her who is now my wife. And in this I surely see and feel that the spirits have been very good to me." Then *Papamotao* suggested that they stop where they were for a few days and make a general hunt, and if need be cache some provisions for use later on in the season. And White Buffalo agreed to this, for he thought in this way *Nagos* would become familiar with these women, and thus have some acquaintances and friends before reaching the other camps.

Those were happy glorious days for our hero and his young wife. Life was sweet. Life was taking on new ideals in the minds and hearts of these noble souls who had found each other, and were destined to play an important part in the history of their people. *Pap-amotao* indicated where the game was to be found, and the young men went after them with zest and industry. Hunting moose is glorious sport, and among the forest people there were always those who excelled in this art of circumventing the fine instincts of these splendid animals. Sometimes almost anyone can kill a moose, but this is a mere incident. The ordinary moose hunt was a matter of profound skill, and close calculation. White Buffalo delighted in this work, and already excelled in it, and the first day's hunt gave him three fine moose to his credit. And *Niska*, who had accompanied him, came in with wonderful tales of his cunning and archery.

"Why, he seems to know where to find them, and his eye is so quick. I thought I was sharp-eyed, but oh my, he can see in the thicket. Said he to me: 'Do you see the tip of the ear of yonder moose?' and I looked and sure enough that was all we could see of the big animal, but there it was, the tip of the ear. And then he crawled up close without breaking a twig or touching a bush. I stopped short and listened and watched, and the only noise I heard was a little cough the moose made because something stuck in his throat. White Buffalo went almost up to him and sent his arrow

right into him, and the moose did not make many jumps when he fell over dying. And when we had skinned and cut up and put away the meat, we went on and found the fresh tracks of several more, and he told me where these now were. And we went there and he killed two of the biggest within a hundred steps of each other. I can tell you, *Nagos*, there is no danger of starving with White Buffalo around. But, my sister, if you dress and take care of all the meat and skins your husband kills and brings in, you will have to be smart."

And *Nagos* smiled and was glad to hear her husband extolled, and said she was willing to do her part as his wife in the work of the camp.

The next day *Niska* and Snake Skin and the boys in *Papamotao's* lodge took some horses and went after the meat and hides of the three moose, and White Buffalo and *Papamotao* went out on the hunt in another direction. *Nagos* and the other women made preparations to stretch the hides and dry the meat, erecting stagings, cutting poles, and were also busy making and mending moccasins, and dressing skins and sewing these into garments, and *Papamotao's* wife was delighted to find that *Nagos* was expert in all this, and highly commended her. And *Nagos* told her new friends that this had been her training all through her girlhood to help her mother in all her work; that she was the only daughter, and she was glad she loved this work, and it was now a great pleasure to be able to do what she could for her husband and his friends.

"Oh," said the older woman, "you have come into a good family. There are no better people than the father and mother of White Buffalo. No wonder they have such a good son."

Thus these native women conversed and were busy while their husbands were out on the chase.

In the grey dawn of the early morning our sturdy hunters were tramping across the valley to the hill range of forest land, where the game were wont to resort at this season. And by the time the sun was two hands-breadth up, they had covered many miles, and were now keenly looking for fresh signs of animal life. And here these were where a band of elk had just now been feeding, and but a little while since moved on.

"Now," said White Buffalo, "if we can only find them in the open, or moving out into it, we can very soon kill enough to keep us busy all the day."

And *Papamotao* looked at his companion, and was astonished at his assurance. He had never been out on the hunt with this man, but knew he was expert. However, to speak as he did just now, was, he thought, a little too soon. Following the tracks they came in sight of the elk. These were grouped and feeding on a side-hill, perhaps a hundred in number.

"Let us crawl up as close as we can," said the young hunter. And when they had reached the last cover, he sat down and took stock of some arrows he took out of his quiver. Scanning and straightening

these, he suggested to *Papamotao* that each one pick from opposite sides of the herd. And the older man nodded assent.

Perhaps there is no finer sight of its kind than a herd of elk in the autumn feeding on the slope of a hill, the spot they are on open prairie, and the ridge and other portions of the hill covered with a dense growth of timber, and this now in its rich tinting. The elk are at this season prime and beautiful. From the spring calf to the oldest cow or bull in the herd, all are sleek and clean and fat. Symmetrical beauty and graceful action are here in wonderful perfection, and one almost shrinks from disturbing the magnificent sight before him. Thus thought White Buffalo, and *Papamotao*, as they sat and watched this herd. But their mission was hides and meat; the caching of provisions for future use was now their business, and sentiment must be brushed aside. And now our hunters, having looked their fill of the scene, began to select, and with a sign to the other White Buffalo pulled his bow, and sent the arrow into the vitals of a big farrow cow on whose rump and brisket the thick heavy fat was clearly apparent. The herd had hardly moved, as the cow jumped, and quick and straight there came another arrow into the lungs of a monster bull, and in a very short time these dropped to the face of the hill, and were vomiting blood from mouth and nostril, and dying fast. But close to them others of their kind were dropping under the same unerring aim, and in an incredibly short time

White Buffalo had six fine fat elk as his share of the hunt. In the meanwhile *Papamotao* had secured two, and then spent the rest of the time watching White Buffalo shoot.

"Why," said he, "you could kill as many as you have arrows for. You are wonderful, my son." And White Buffalo smiled his quiet smile and said:

"Thus it is given to me to do." "Yes, we know that," came the older man's answer.

Eight big elk to be carefully skinned and butchered, and the meat laid so as not to heat, and scare signals put up to frighten off the prowling wolf or bear, and carrion kind, means a lot of work, and it was dark and after before our hunters reached the lodges and relieved the anxious inmates as to the reason for their prolonged absence. *Nagos* had felt a new experience when darkness came and her lord and lover came not, and now she could not suppress her joy at his entrance, and his heart bounded in response to her manifest delight. And the faithful Snake Skin, observing all this, was happy in their great happiness. And then he went out and looked at the stars and thought much concerning the Little Star. His day was coming, so he fondly hoped.

That evening, as all the principals were gathered in the one lodge, *Papamotao* told the story of the hunt, and commented on the marvellous archery of White Buffalo. He said he had met with some fine bowmen in his day, but certainly to kill six elk without losing or breaking an arrow or missing a shot was most wonder-

ful skill. And *Niska* chimed in with his father's version of the killing of the five caribou last winter, when White Buffalo and Snake Skin were with them in the north.

"Ah!" said *Papamotao*, "that was what you were doing last winter when you were so long away?"

"Oh," said his motherly wife, "White Buffalo was doing something more than hunting caribou last winter." And then all laughed, as both our hero and his beautiful bride blushed and joined in the fun.

"He was hunting *Nagos*," said Snake Skin, "and I as his friend had to travel many weary long distances because of his hunting her."

"Yes, but what about the Little Star?" questioned *Nagos*. And the laugh was on Snake Skin, as *Nagos* told her new friends about her cousin, or younger sister, *Achakosis*, and how they had extreme difficulty in bringing Snake Skin back from the northern country. Then White Buffalo said:

"We now have the meat and hides of eleven elk and moose, and we must look after all this before we hunt any more."

"That is right," answered *Papamotao*, so it was arranged that the men of the party would bring in the meat and hides on the morrow, and then help for another day in drying the meat and gathering the wood, and keeping up the fires around camp, and also prepare a strong cache wherein to store the provisions and skins and hides they would not be able to move when they joined some of the other camps. These caches must

be made strong enough to withstand the wolverine, who was the most persistent and bold of the wild animals frequenting this part of the country. Many a carelessly made cache had this cunning brute destroyed, and our party had now extra employment in circumventing the wolverine, and all other predatory animals, except man. And the latter were so few and so scattered over this great big wilderness, the chances were that he would not find the cache. And if he did, such was the simple honesty of the people, that the cache when found would remain unmolested. Of course, if aliens made the discovery, then all would be destroyed.

After two days spent in steady work in bringing in meat and hides, and helping around camp, and building cache, White Buffalo and *Papamotao* left Snake Skin and *Niska* to go on with this work, and again went out on the hunt. As usual, they started very early, and the day was still young when they tracked an enormous moose. *Papamotao* said:

"Young man, you place him and look for him, and I will follow." And White Buffalo took the lead and brought them on to the big fellow and killed him. And it was while they were skinning and butchering the moose that *Papamotao* caught sight of an object moving across an opening in the timber, and to satisfy himself went over to make sure, and was some little time gone when White Buffalo heard a call, and feeling that something was wrong with his friend, seized his bow and quiver and dashed off at a quick run in the direction



the call came from. Soon he heard sounds of a tussle, and here was a large cinnamon bear crunching up his friend and counsellor. He saw that he dare not use his arrows, and flung aside his bow and quiver, and rushed in with his hunting knife, and as the bear was on top of *Papamotao*, White Buffalo straddled the bear, and sent the knife into him with his right hand, and grabbed him by the ear and side of the head with the other, and so astonished was Bruin that he leaped away from the prostrate man, and carried his new assailant with him, astride his back. But White Buffalo was using his knife all this time with great energy, and the life blood of the bear was gushing forth in such volume that he soon staggered and stumbled, and the agile hunter was free from his strange ride, and ran back to his friend, who was altogether conscious, and had watched the unique ride, though pretty well hurt by the bear.

White Buffalo found that *Papamotao's* right arm was broken and the flesh of it sorely mangled. Otherwise, excepting a few scratches on his back, he was unhurt. Very soon he had him up, and, cutting up one of his own buckskin leggings into wrapping and binding, he improvised some splints, and tied up his friend's arm and then made a fire and ran back for some of the tit-bits of the moose, and in a short time had these broiling over the blaze. While *Papamotao* ate, White Buffalo skinned and cut up the bear, and having fixed the meat and hides of both moose and bear, he took *Papamotao's* arm, and thus they went back to camp,

both profoundly thankful that *Papamotao's* life was spared. The latter made light of his wounds, but they had to rest many times on the way home. The loss of blood and the struggle had taken the strength from *Papamotao*, and it was night when they reached the lodges.

Once more the Little Mother's big heart was all in a flutter. Where was White Buffalo? But presently in he came humming a love song of his own which he had made up during these few days of his great happiness, and *Nagos* was glad.

But what was the matter in the next lodge? Something had happened. *Papamotao's* wife had called out in alarm, and White Buffalo explained that one of Snake Skin's ardent friends, the bears, had also taken to handling *Papamotao*, and he was hurt, but he hoped that his old friend would be all right in a few nights.

"What can we do?" said *Nagos*. "Why, we can carefully and gently bind up his arm which is broken, and dress his wounds," said White Buffalo. "First he will want to eat, and then rest a little, and then you and I will fix him."

"That is right," said Snake Skin, "*Nagos* is a splendid medicine herself." "You mean the Little Star, do you not?" answered *Nagos*, and *Niska* laughed and said he thought Snake Skin was always thinking about the Star's beauty and goodness; at any rate he was always singing about them. And Snake Skin told *Niska* that he would not go out tripping with him any more if he was going to tell everybody about his singing.

When supper was over, and *Papamotao's* arm set and bound, and his wounds dressed, in which *Nagos* had a leading part, for she was one of those among women born to nurse, and who come into the art thereof as by birthright, and *Papamotao* had thanked her over and over, and our party was gathered in his lodge, he told them of the day's hunt, and how he had caught a glimpse of some living object and ran over to see what it was. And here was the big cinnamon turning a log over, and picking up the grubs, and he had let an arrow fly at him but had missed his aim by a hand's breadth, hitting the bear too far forward, and the bear instead of running away jumped for me and had me down, and broke my arm, and I do not know what he would have done, had not White Buffalo come to my help and rode him off."

At this they all laughed. "Yes, you may laugh," said *Papamotao*, "for I, pained and sore, had to laugh, when I saw the bear jumping away with my friend on his back, and sitting him as if he was a horse. But then you know White Buffalo is not like other men. I have travelled far and seen many queer and funny things, but this experience today is new. To ride a bear on the gallop and kill him as he jumps, and to save your friend's life at the same time, is something worth while. That is what White Buffalo did today, besides killing a big buck moose, and cooking my dinner as well. And if you, my wife and children, value me as husband and father, then you must, next to the Great Good

Spirit, thank White Buffalo." And the mother and family broke out in a thanksgiving song of gratitude to the Good Spirit, and to White Buffalo.

For days the hunt went on, and provisions were made and baled, and also manufactured into pemmican, and hides were fleshed and scraped and made into parchment for future tanning and dressing and smoking, and in all this each one had a part. *Papamotao*, being crippled and sore, looked after the horses, and became a general scout for the camp. The food pile in the cache grew every day, and White Buffalo's restless energy was very apparent. In a little while the cache was full, and *Papamotao* was able to travel and Snake Skin was almost himself again. So, packing up, our party of two lodges moved southward in search of White Buffalo's parents and the rest of their people.

The day of their breaking camp did not pass without incident, for it was during its hours that *Niska* was chased by a roused and wicked moose bull, which he had tantalized by wounding with one of his arrows. *Niska* was alone when he found the fresh track of the moose, and the weather being propitious he approached quite close, and let his arrow fly, but only succeeded in making the bull vexed, and though he sent another arrow, this added to the big fellow's wrath, and he came for his assailant savagely. *Niska* turned and fled across through some scrub, and then out through the open on a stretch for some large trees in the next bluff of timber, hoping to be able to dodge among these, and

possibly climb one. However, the moose was gaining fast, and it seemed that he would catch *Niska* long before the trees could be reached. On for his life ran the brother of *Nagos*, and coming behind him was the huge bull moose who, if he had not been so fat, would have made quick work of racing *Niska*. But just then White Buffalo came upon the scene, and his quick sense took in the situation and away he bounded with all speed to the rescue. He thought first of pulling an arrow, then he bethought him of his knife, and said to himself:

"I will play the wolf this time, and show yonder bull what can be done, that is, if I catch him before he is on *Niska*." And as he thought of *Niska*, he also thought of *Nagos*, and sprang quicker and further and faster to save, if possible, her much-loved brother. Poor *Niska* was running for life, and "all that a man hath will he give for his life." *Niska* was giving limb and lung and all his strength to flee from the mad bull, and did not know that help was coming. The bull also was giving all attention to this impudent biped who had dared disturb his lordliness by sending sharp, stinging darts into his flesh. He could feel them now as he spurted after his victim. But he did not feel the approach of the strong, swift runner man who was now close upon him, and who, pulling his knife from its scabbard deftly cut the tendons of the big moose's legs and had him hamstrung, and incapable of doing more than rising onto his front legs and shaking his great



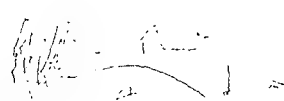


*Niska Runs For His Life.*

antlers in impotent rage. While White Buffalo shouted to *Niska* and asked him what he was running so fast for, and the boy turning to look, could hardly believe his eyes, for there was the helpless moose, and beside him stood his wonderful brother-in-law, now more wonderful than ever in *Niska's* mind and affection. Then while White Buffalo sent him to intercept the party and to tell *Papamotao* to camp as soon as he could in order that they might take in the meat and hide of the moose, and while the boy went on his errand White Buffalo killed the moose and skinned and cut him up ready for packing into camp.

In the meantime Snake Skin was hunting bear, and this day his luck was turned, for he killed two fine large bears and ran no risks in doing so. This greatly encouraged him, and as *Papamotao* said, broke the spell of ill-luck which had come across his path. *Nagos* congratulated him on recovering his breath, and remarked that doubtless his eloquence would come back in full force, and perhaps stronger than ever, and he answered that one needed the gift of eloquence to do her justice, and she quickly replied: "You mean the Little Star," and Snake Skin blushed and was silent.

That night around the camp fire *Niska* gave a very vivid description of his race with the big moose, and wondered when he would be able to shoot as straight as White Buffalo could. He told how he had fired two arrows at the bull, and only succeeded in making him raging mad, and how tremendous the monster did look





when he charged straight for him; "and of course," said he, "there was nothing to do but to run, and run I did with all my breath, but the big fellow came thundering right after me, and crashing through the scrub and out on to the plain, and then I saw the big trees and made for them with all my soul. I could feel him coming behind me and I raced for my life. Then all of a sudden some one shouted to me, and I heard a voice: 'Ho, there what are you running so fast for?' And I looked and there was White Buffalo standing beside the great big bull, and the bull was down on his haunches, and could not get up, and he was shaking his big head, and I said to myself: 'That is the work of that wonderful man, *Neesta*.'\* He had run up from behind and hamstrung the bull. Did you ever hear of any man doing such a deed before? I tell you, my sister, your husband surpasses all others. He is swift, he is strong, he is brave, even if he is my *Neesta*, I must tell it out. Even if he is your husband, my sister, I will speak the truth and say, 'White Buffalo is a great man.'"

And *Nagos* looked at her husband and smiled in contentment because of her possession of him. And Snake Skin spoke up:

"Yes, *Niska*, you may be proud and thankful too; for if it had not been for White Buffalo we might be mourning tonight, instead of rejoicing as we are. If the Great Spirit spares your life in the days and moons to come, you will see and hear many things to make you

\* "*Neesta*," "My Brother-in-law."

glad and proud that you became related to our young chief. What he did today is just like he has been doing for many winters and summers. He loves to save life. Why, he even spared his enemies. He thinks nothing of risking his own life to save that of another. Wait until you reach the lodges of our people, and from many lips you will hear tales of his bravery and kindness."

Those were wonderful days when our hero, having won his bride, was bringing her home. It was the season of gladness. All nature was in unison; spring and summer had done their work, and now the rich autumn in its fulness was queen, and the earth was glad. The whole animal creation, now in its prime, now in the season of its matings, was full of rejoicing. This was apparent in the loud strong calls that came from the depth of forest, or might be heard where gorgeous timber lands reaching out intercepted the creamy, golden pastures. Moose and elk and the deer species, the "White" and "Black Tails," those exquisitely beautiful creatures, were gathering up in herds and flocks, and the testing time was on, and loud challenging calls answered each other across the valley, and resounded among the hills. Thus it was with the strong animal life which abounded in the forest land of the great Northwest at this time.

Moreover, the great flocks of myriad fowl, who had spent the summer in the far north on the west shores of the Hudson's Bay, and out on the confines of the great timberless barren level, and in that immense

region known as the Athabasca country, where in countless multitude they had mated and nested and brought forth their young, and later had moulted and again taken on their new and beautiful plumage. And now, in the strength of their freshness and maturity, and with the full force of the great north behind them, these were beginning their flight southward. All night long, they came through the listening air. The swish of their wings, the call of bird to bird, swan, and goose, and many varieties of duck and millions of waveys, and to give change the loon would ever and anon sound forth his loud clear note which seemed to say:

"And I am also travelling, even I am moving south with my friends."

And thus among such scenes and sounds our little party was slowly travelling southward. To Nagos this land was new. Her life had been limited by the stretch of lake, and the sweep and bend of stream. Interminable forest country had been her home. Low land region was where she came from. But now, these wonderful prairie valleys, these gently sloping hillsides, these beautiful placings of timber on the plain, these wonderful summits of hill ranges, from which one could look and look, and it did seem as if there was no end. Beauty and glory everywhere. And here was White Buffalo beside her, her lord and master, the one whom she had dreamed of and longed for, and unto whom she had sent out her spirit on distant quests, and had never rested until she found him and became conscious of his

welfare, and had felt her whole being to rejoice in the consciousness of his seeking her. And now what had been desired was truly and fully possessed. Her husband was with her, and she knew he loved her.

Though their honeymoon had but begun, already he had shown himself to be both brave and good, and every day of their journey was proving to her that this man the Great Spirit had given to her as her mate was worthy of her strongest love. With White Buffalo, these days seemed to him as if they were at the summit of his fate. Ever since that time some thirteen moons ago when he first caught a glimpse of a lone maiden flitting in and out around the solitary lodge in the far northland, his love had been constant and true. On hunting field, away in the distant west on the war path, when with the multitude, or in absolute aloneness, he had forever thought of and dreamed about *Nagos*. For her he had hunted, for her he had scouted, for her he had fought, for her he had done many brave acts, for her he had raced against the champion and won, for her he had besought the spirits many times, for her he had travelled night and day, and wearied not. And now, with the blessing of her parents, with the spirits smiling upon him, with his own spirit of his dream, his *Pawakun*, giving him his benediction, with the rich warm full love of *Nagos* speaking through her beautiful eyes, and every act, into his inmost soul, he now possessed her. Thus, these young people were filled with supreme happiness, and to them at this time

this world was a scene of joy, and Snake Skin, the faithful companion, the constant friend, he looked on with satisfaction sublime. White Buffalo was happy, therefore Snake Skin rejoiced.

And *Papamotao*, the older man, the discoverer of our hero, as he claimed, the man of discernment and of much experience gained by his great travels, would say:

"White Buffalo is as my son. I saw his goodness; I knew he was wiser than most men. I believed he was brave. And now, behold, he is our leader, and I am proud, and I rejoice with him in his great joy. The spirits led him to discover a beautiful maiden who has become his wife. Every day since I saw her, I am thankful for his sake, for our people's sake. White Buffalo is well mated, and this makes my heart glad."

And the women of *Papamotao's* camp had already grown to love *Nagos* for her own sake. She had won their affection, and *Papamotao's* wife was as a mother unto her, and his daughters were as sisters. And in such mood and amid such environment, our little company travelled southward. Two days after *Niska's* race with the big bull-moose they struck camp, and during their first day's journey, saw signs of the vicinity of people. These they expected to be their friends. However, Snake Skin and *Niska* scouted ahead and came back with the news that their people in goodly number were encamped in the valley of the Swan. To White Buffalo this was cheery news; to *Nagos*, cool and collected as she generally was, the knowledge that her husband's

people were near by, and that she, a perfect stranger, would soon enter their lodges, caused her to feel embarrassed. But Snake Skin, quickly noticing the effect of his news, said:

"And now, *Nagos*, in a little while, with the sun still high today, you will be in the lodge of your new mother. She is longing to see you. Already in her heart she loves you, and all the women of our camp will welcome you. From today while you live, *Nagos*, the hearts of our people will be full of love for you. Cheer up, my sister, and be brave."

And *Papamotao's* wife came up, and learning of the news of the big camp's vicinity, cheered her with loving words. *Niska* also was greatly abashed. He was curious and he was glad, but he wondered how he would go among these people of forest and plain, so different in life from his own friends. For him also Snake Skin had kind words:

"I will look after you, *Niska*, you are as my younger brother. Where I go you will come."

Then, as was the custom, everyone took extra pains with their toilet. Paints and feathers and ornaments and articles of apparel were produced, and speedily costume and color made wonderful change with our little company. All but *Nagos* had made use of the several colored ochre. She was as ever herself, and when *Papamotao's* wife and daughters urged her to paint, she smilingly refused, and *Papamotao* and Snake Skin said: "Let her be, the Great Spirit has painted *Nagos*. Let her be even as he made her."

And now they moved on up the valley and across the plain and over the brow of the hill, and here at their feet were the lodges of the prairie and wood Crees. This was a new sight for the maiden and lad of the North Wind Maker's camp. Never had they seen as many people convened and camped together in their lives hitherto. Never had they beheld so many horses. These great big lodges, eighteen and twenty-skin tents, all made of the hides of the buffalo, standing out there, some of them in the distance spotlessly white, others with painted panels, denoting that they were the homes of distinguished men, all with great ear flaps and ventilators reaching out heavenward. And from the extreme points hanging from these were buffalo tail tassels, giving them fitting and unique appearance. In and among the lodges were the stagings upon which meat was drying. And here and there were big frames upon which the hides of the animals were stretched. Dog and horse travois were put up and leaning against each other all over the encampment. And to *Nagos* and *Niska* a new world was dawning. But now they are seen. Here comes a horseman at full gallop, and he merely pauses to look at the new bride and to cast a glance of welcome at White Buffalo, and he dashes his horse to and fro, and in so doing has signalled to the camp: "White Buffalo is here; our friends have returned."

Then he makes back in a mad gallop to muster up the horsemen, and to call on all who have guns and powder: "Come forth and salute with loud welcome White Buffalo and bride!"

As he rides through the camp he hastily says to this young woman on this side and to another on the other side, "Verily, she is beautiful," and these young maidens of White Buffalo's camp were not jealous. He rode to the door of the lodge of White Buffalo's parents, and threw his voice into the waiting mother's heart:

"Your children are here! Come forth and give them welcome!"

If we had been there that glorious autumn day, and beheld the enthusiasm of the people, "these wild people," "these savage nomads" (as men have called them), as they fired their guns and filled their lungs, and sang their songs, and royally welcomed White Buffalo and *Nagos*, and when they beheld her felt that here indeed was a maiden worthy of their young chief, whom they all loved, and of whom they were so proud, I say, if we had been there, and looked upon this joyous scene, and listened to the conversation that took place on every hand, we would have said, "these are gentlefolk; these are manly men; these are true-hearted woman, and not savages."

There was great joy in that camp, joy in the mother's heart. Her son had brought his bride, and quietly said, "another child for you to love, my mother." And *Nagos* at once felt that she could be at home and safe with such a mother. The aged chief came forth and gave them his blessing. The medicine man sang a hymn, and benedicted them with an incantation. The



seer went into a trance, and sent his spirit into the far future, and returning strolled to and fro among the lodges and told the people that this man and this woman would prove to be a very great blessing to them all. Said he:

"Their future is bright; this union is good; this maiden from the far north, and this man of our hearts, will be a great blessing among our people."

And many drums did beat, and many love songs were improvised and sung, and the occasion of White Buffalo and *Nagos* reaching their home from their honeymoon trip was made glorious by much rejoicing in the large camp.

The next day there was a big council, and the autumn movements were discussed. The question came up, "Shall we go to war this fall?" and a shout came back in answer: "Yes, yes."

But *Papamotao* arose in his place and spoke as follows: "My friends, let us stop and think. Have we not by common consent made White Buffalo our war chief? Though very young he has excelled us who are older, in skill and wisdom in war. Those of us who have been with him in danger know full well that his heart is as brave as it is good. For myself, I would say, let there be no going to war unless he leads, and as it would be unkind and improper for him to go far from his lodge at this time, when he has but now brought home to his fireside the wife of his choice, to me it would be wrong for us as a people to

ask White Buffalo to lead any of our young men on the war path this fall. I would rather, if you would listen to me, my friends, say unto you (remember, I have gone with you often to war; remember I am not shrinking from going on the long road against our enemies), but at this time I would say, let there be no war party go out from us this autumn. Let us rather move on out to the plains and meet the great herds as they come north, and make much provision and prepare for the winter, and then if we are alive when the next spring comes, let us be ready for the warpath. Then it will be fitting for White Buffalo to lead us forth, and be again as he has been, our successful and victorious war chief. Who among you would want him, after his long seeking, after his patient wooing, after his winning this wonderful woman that he has brought home to our lodges, after that we have beheld her, and rejoiced with him because of his possessing her, I say unto you, my people, who would have the heart to ask White Buffalo to leave his young wife and go out to danger and possible death. Besides all this, there is no need for it. We have had bloodshed enough for one summer. Our warriors have been victorious sufficient for one season. White Buffalo has won for us sufficient glory for this time. Let him rest beside the maiden of his choice. Let him stay home to gladden her heart and the hearts of his parents. This, my friends, is what I would have you to do."

Long before he sat down he knew he had won. Quick came the response from young and old, "Yes, yes, so let it be. What you have said is proper and good. We will not go to war; we will go out on the big hunt, and in the meantime every heart will rejoice with White Buffalo."

CHAPTER XIV.

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A Buffalo Hunt Which Ends in Disaster.

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**T**HIS was a large gathering from distant parts; the Bands had gathered as was their custom.

Twice in the year, first in the early summer and again in the autumn, they were wont to assemble and for a season dwell together. Just now there are some two hundred odd lodges who, when convened, become the subjects of one chief, and all minor chiefs are his council. And in accord with the outspoken plan indicated in the address of *Papamotao*, arrangements were made to move out on to the edge of the plains. If the buffalo were coming in, their point of approach could be learned by advance scouts, and the large camp would move around out of the way of their coming. This would let the herds into the park land country. The further they went, the longer, for the time being, would these semi-forest Crees have them as their prey. This plan having been adopted, the whole camp immediately began to put it into execution. Once again the seer made his forecast, and told the people he saw prosperity, but also he saw trouble. Just how this

trouble might come he could not tell. Part of their near day was clear. The sun did shine brightly; but again, the sky is overcast. There are clouds and blackness."

Thus spoke the seer. However, the people answered: "And so it has been forever, and we will take the risk." And on they marched, and being well equipped with provisions and travelling through a land wherein forest game abounded, their day's pilgrimage was never long. But unless the weather forbade, they continually moved. This nomadic life was to these people as second nature, and doubtless for them was full of health and sanitary blessing.

When within a couple of days' march of the Chain of Lakes River, their scouts brought them in word that the advance guards of the big herd were coming north, and already large numbers of them had crossed what is now the Qu'Appelle Valley, and that their course was somewhat westward of the camp.

"Then we will move eastward and around, and give them room," said the Chief.

Accordingly the camp's course was turned down into that big region situate between the Beaver and the Chain of Lakes Rivers. To *Nagos* and *Niska*, all this life was very strange and full of constant interest. The great big stretches of prairie, the wonderful grasses that were like thick carpets covering the land everywhere; the antelope and the small deer, such as they had never seen before, were being brought in, and were

objects of interest. The method of travel on foot and on horseback, so different from the canoe and the dog train, the travois for both horses and dogs, the costumes of the people, the constant and continuous face painting of both young and old, which Snake Skin prevailed upon *Niska* to adopt, but which *Nagos* never adopted, and for which singularity no one ever criticized her. Had not White Buffalo said, "Let her alone"; and had not Snake Skin also said, "Let her be even as the Great Spirit made her," and Snake Skin was a strong friend, and he made his influence felt in this camp, and it would have been woe unto any man who would have dared say a word in criticism of *Nagos*.

In the lodge of White Buffalo's parents, where he and his wife continued to dwell, there was great happiness. Father and mother were full of satisfaction because of the constant joy of their son. Every day they saw that his life was blessed. Every day they learned more and more of the splendid qualities and strong character of this woman White Buffalo had found and brought out of the north country. Every day they said to themselves: "The seer saw true, for blessings have come into our lodge."

And now the camp turned westward in its detour, and the real hunt of the buffalo began. Sometimes in the movements of the herd they came near the camp, then half of the hunters would go forth. Here such horses as Blackfoot and Moosehair came to the

front, and were peerless in the chase. The big grey was also a good buffalo runner, but White Buffalo had said: "Let him stay in camp, he belongs to *Nagos*; 'tis enough for him to do her bidding." Many a time some one would say, "Why is it that that big fine horse does not run buffalo? We never see him taken out on the hunt." And Snake Skin would reply:

"He belongs to the Little Mother. For her White Buffalo risked his life, and went out alone against an enemy and brought home this magnificent horse. The Black Thigh belongs to the Little Mother; he is sacred to her use."

By this time *Nagos* was becoming expert as a horsewoman, and it was a great day for her when she rode forth at the side of her lord to watch the big race after buffalo. Blackfoot was being led by his master, and cropped grass as he trotted by the side of the other horses. And now the time came for the hunters to make ready. And White Buffalo had left the pony he had ridden out with *Nagos*, and he told her how to keep with the company of followers, and to ride on to the hill below which the run would be made, and then after the race had fairly started to come on as fast as she could, and see as much of the hunt as was possible. And he put his pad on Blackfoot's back, and he felt his bowstring, and he picked several arrows out of his quiver. All the while he was looking at *Nagos*; all the while he was talking to the Little Mother.

"You see this arrow, *Nagos*, now I am straightening it. If I know you are watching, I will feel that I can send this arrow straight where I want it to go. If I am in sight, and close enough, watch for the cow I will pick to drop aside and tumble and die. Look, *Nagos*, this is the next one I will pull and fire."

"Oh," said *Nagos*, "but I am afraid you may fall. These buffalo are so big, their multitude is so great. It makes me tremble for fear you may be hurt, my husband."

And he answered: "That is not like you *Nagos*; you are brave, you are strong. Why, I verily believe that if I was to give you bow and quiver you could run with your own horse and kill buffalo," and they laughed at the thought, but the captain of the hunt shouted, "Make ready," and every man who was going to run mounted his horse, and again cautioning *Nagos* to be careful, and with a look of love and profound trust, away went Blackfoot and his rider to the charge.

Only those who have been there, who have taken part in this race, whose nostrils have been full of the dust of the great plains as this was raised by the rush and stampede and fierce gallop of the countless herds; only those whose blood has heated and whose nerves have tingled as they swept on over rough country, down hill and across valley, with countless badger holes on every hand, with danger to neck and limb omnipresent, with horse and man becoming as one in the



rare excitement of the chase, only such can truly realize the exhilaration of the regular hunt on horseback over the great plains after these wild cattle.

In the autumn the fat cows were the goal of every hunter. To kill fat cows, to kill the fattest cow of that day's hunt, was the ambition of every man who bestrode his horse and dashed forth to slay, to have the staging that stood out from your lodge rich with the yellow fat from the back, and portions of picked animals, was the strong desire of every ambitious hunter. And we think we are safe in saying that there never was more delicious meat than that of the buffalo cow when in good condition. The great plains of the North American continent were their breeding ground. These in their immense extent gave the buffalo tremendous opportunity for constant migration. The great inland country north and south, east of the Rocky Mountains, with its wonderful atmospheres, with its abundant sunshine, with its nutritious grasses, the result of the adaptation of nature to soil and upland climate, and big percentages of sunlight, were full of quality, which with all the rest as a multiple environment, made this animal to possess the sweetest and tastiest meat the world has ever seen.

For these fat cows White Buffalo and his confrères rode forth to seek and kill that day. From the summit of yon hill, surrounded as *Nagos* was with women and boys as companions, heedless of these, she was praying, she was sending her spirit out yonder on

to the hunting field to accompany her husband. Down yonder on the plain, our hero, stronger than ever, more manly than ever, feeling the prize of true manhood as never before, was saying to himself, was talking to his horse:

"We must do better than ever today. Thick backfats, nothing but fat cows for you and me today, Blackfoot." And Blackfoot twitched his ears and answered back:

"Rub the dust out of your eyes, White Buffalo, and look and pick the best, then let me know, and we will catch them soon."

Thus the man and the horse understood each other, and White Buffalo did rub the dust from his eyes, and with his sharp, quick glance scanned the seething, crowding, rushing mass of God's cattle, as they fairly flew amid the thousand hills of their pasture.

"There is the first one," said White Buffalo with the point of his knee, as he pressed the side of his horse, and Blackfoot changed his course and sped away, gathering strength with every jump. This race was in full view of yonder hill summit, and Nagos saw her husband grasp his bow, and presently she saw him rise in his saddle. Then she saw him pull the bow; then she watched the buffalo. And sure enough, one dropped behind and began to wobble in her gait, and fell, and she and her companions cantered down the hill to where the dead buffalo lay, for she well knew that in a little while White Buffalo would come

back to the spot of his first kill. This day he shot four, and they were all fat, and that evening and the next day the stagings beside his lodge were covered with the evidences of his skill in picking choice buffalo. Thus the camp moved slowly on, making provision, dressing robes, tanning hides, pounding meat, making pemmican, and in the meanwhile visiting and engaging in various games of sport, and thus the good-natured crowd was thoroughly enjoying these days of pleasant intercourse.

Up to this time no signs of humanity outside of themselves had been met with. They were now a considerable way up the north bank of the Chain of Lakes River, and while there was constant vigilance, yet as the autumn passed away, and the days and nights came and went, and there were no signs of humanity other than themselves, some became careless, and even as the seer had foreseen, suddenly their sky was overcast.

The enemy, having woke up to the fact that away down in the eastern country there was some one who for the last two seasons had worried them a whole lot, and who evidently were braver and wiser and more cunning in war than ordinary, had taken council together, and determined to gather up a strong force and scout down into the land from whence their enemy had come, and take dire vengeance upon him and his people if possible. Using extra precaution, this strong war party had come upon the Crees without being felt, and

suddenly in the glimmering dawn of the day White Buffalo's camp was charged in its turn by a host of Blackfeet. The long autumn night had made the scouts drowsy. Moreover, on this trip, watch as they would, they had not discovered the presence of either enemy or friend, and in measure had become careless.

But now, their lifelong foes were upon them. Very few outside the circle of lodges had escaped. The most were knocked on the head and stabbed and scalped in a twinkling, and on into the circle of the lodges dashed the multitude on every side, eager to have revenge, eager to wipe out disgrace and humiliation. For among these warriors were the survivors and friends of those camps our hero and his party had also startled from their morning sleep, and with these was the brave who had ridden the big grey, and who longed to recover his horse as well as meet his wily and brave foe. Fierce was the rush, and many were killed before the Crees were really into the fight. But soon White Buffalo was on Blackfoot, and he sent Snake Skin one way and *Papamotao* another, and himself roused the whole camp to bravery by a few strong, quick sentences, and then with the war whoop of his fathers ringing from his big lungs he led his people to drive back the enemy. In this he and his men were successful, but their loss was heavy. *Nagos* was at first dumbfounded. She had heard of war from afar. She had listened to Snake Skin as he recounted White Buffalo's brave deeds when out on the warpath. But now, to be brought suddenly into

contact with these things was awful. With anguish of heart she had seen her husband mount his horse and dash away as was his duty. She had seen *Niska* galloping to the front with Snake Skin. And here she stood, almost paralyzed in the presence of the battle. Her whole being was with her husband.

"*Nagos*, come to where the people are gathering for shelter," said her new mother, but there she stood and gazed into the rush where her loved one had disappeared. Suddenly there came dashing through between the lodges some Blackfoot horsemen, wielding their war clubs, and dealing out death wherever possible, and one of these, a big powerful brave, riding a fine horse, suddenly cast his eye on the face and form of *Nagos*, and in a moment his thought changed, and flinging his war club down, he pressed his horse up beside the beautiful woman, and clasping her with his arm he swung her into the saddle before him, and then turned his attention to escape from the camp with his captive. He succeeded in leaving the lodges, and was beginning to feel the elation of getting away with this wonderful prize, when presently the prize herself woke up to the situation, and began to think. And with *Nagos* to think was to act, and as the warrior was urging his horse to his best, and the noble brute was responding, he put his foot into a badger hole, and nearly fell with his double load, and *Nagos* involuntarily clasped the Blackfoot to save herself from the fall. However, the horse righted himself, and the warrior

began to croon out a song of gladness and victory. But when *Nagos'* hand went around the waist of her captor it touched the hilt of his knife in his belt, and then she came to herself, and said:

"I will kill this man." She thought of White Buffalo, she thought of her wifehood, of her honor, and her whole being was fired to brave all things to save these if possible.

Quietly she released the knife from its place, and rising up a little in her captor's arms, as if she was resigning herself to her fate in his hands, she thought of White Buffalo, and sent the sharp knife home to the man's heart. Almost at once his death came, and she took the lines from his hand, and stopped the horse, as the limp body of her captor fell to the ground and she stood beside it with the lines of the horse in one hand, and the blood-stained knife in the other, and thus she stood, thankful and stunned at the same time with her act of killing a man. She, the Little Mother, whose heart was always warm and kind. Oh, this was awful! And her great human feeling was alternating between joy and sorrow, and thus she stood, when from across the plain there came dashing down upon her two horsemen, who proved to be Snake Skin and *Niska*. She had not seen them, but they had been running the race of their life, for they had caught sight of the warrior urging his horse away from the camp, and then *Niska* had said:

"He has caught some one; see, he has some one before him on the horse," and the boy at once thought of his sister, *Nagos*. Oh, *Nagos*, surely it cannot be! And Snake Skin pushed the Moosehair to his best, and *Niska* came charging after him as his mount permitted. And they had seen the horse stop, and the man fall, and now they saw the figure standing beside the horse, and now they saw it was *Nagos*. And their hearts leaped into their mouths as they dashed in and beheld the scene of the dead Blackfoot warrior and his horse and trappings, and *Nagos* standing with the horse held by one hand, and the bloody knife in the other. There she stood like an avenging queen, and sobbing like a woman.

"Oh, *Nagos*!" said Snake Skin; "Oh, my sister!" said *Niska*. And Snake Skin, jumping from his horse, took the bloody knife from her hand and kissed her cheek and said: "Brave woman, worthy wife, great big heart!" And *Niska* clasped her in his arms and kissed her again and again, exclaiming, "Oh, my sister!"

There was no need for her to tell. They had seen the act, and the story of the tragedy was before them.

"Go yonder, *Nagos*, and sit down and rest," was Snake Skin's brief command, and as *Nagos* did his bidding, he, as was fitting to the time, took the Blackfoot's knife, and scalped the Blackfoot, and he and *Niska* took his bow and quiver, and ermined and scalp-locked



*Nagos Kills Her Captor.*





buckskin shirt and leggings, and leading the horse over to where *Nagos* sat still sobbing as if her heart would break, Snake Skin said:

"Come, my sister, we must look for your husband." "Oh, yes, my husband, where is he?" And *Nagos* jumped to her feet and wiped her eyes, ready to go and do to find White Buffalo.

In the meanwhile White Buffalo had been in the thick of the battle. He had fought with war club and knife, and then when he had his enemies turned, he took his bow and quiver, and shot man after man from his horse, and capturing the horse and trappings, sent these back with his followers and rushed on, for Blackfoot was now in his element and knew no tiring.

Thus was White Buffalo engaged when his heart seemed to feel the sob of the heart of *Nagos*, and something seemed to say in his ear, "come," and back he galloped through the lodges to his parents' home, and called: "*Nagos*!" and there came no answer, but his quick eye saw where the earth was freshly stirred, and then he read as in big print what had occurred. His *Nagos* was captured by the enemy; and jumping on to Blackfoot he came thundering out from the camp on the trail. Blackfoot seemed to feel his master's anguish of soul, and said:

"Let me go!" And both horse and master followed the course the Blackfoot warrior had taken with his great prize. Snake Skin had led up the dead man's horse, and tightened the girth of the saddle, and short-

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ened the stirrup strings, and now as *Nagos* was eager to find her husband, she mounted the horse, and the three set out on their way back to camp.

"Where is White Buffalo?" said *Nagos* in her heart, and then Snake Skin's quick eye saw the horseman coming on the trail like the wind, and he spoke up:

"Here is White Buffalo. Let your heart sing, *Nagos*, and be glad. Here is your husband and my own true friend!" And Snake Skin broke out in a song of thanksgiving for his heart was full of joy.

Racing up, raising the dust and making the earth ring with the impetuosity of his rush, came the ardent lover, the true husband, and jumping from his horse, he clasped his *Nagos* in his arms, and held her as if forever. Heart to heart they stood on the plain, these souls whom God had mated. Snake Skin and *Niska* sat their horses and witnessed this scene of sacred joy. Then Snake Skin spoke:

"Come, mount your horses and let us be going, there is much to be done today." And again he pealed forth in thankful song, and as he sang, he thought of the Little Star, and his heart pulsed stronger and truer, as he let his spirit wander out after her.

Reaching the lodges, they found the people recovering from the shock of the tumult and the onslaught of battle, and all anxious concerning White Buffalo and *Nagos*. Here these were safe and well. Then there was a general stock-taking, and it was found that there was serious loss in their camp, mourning in almost every

lodge, and the whole camp was caused to mourn, for the famous traveller *Papamotao*, had died, valiantly fighting for his lodge and people. This great warrior had given his last warwhoop. He had taken many scalps, but now the enemy had taken his own scalp-lock. White Buffalo's mother and *Nagos* were busy comforting the bereaved wife and family. Hurriedly these people gave the last rites to the bodies of their kin who had been slain. With ceremony and ritual the lodge of *Papamotao* was securely fastened, and the dead hero was brought into it, and his hunting and war equipment arranged around him, and food and wood and water left in the lodge, and when all was done, the whole camp moved some distance on to fresh ground. As the march was made, and the scene of the fight left behind, the women and orphan children were continuous in their wailing.

"My son, my son!" "My husband, oh, my husband!" Thus they cried and went on their way, and the men in silence moved in advance and rear and flank, and as the seer had predicted, the clouds were on the camp. Indeed, there was a cloud on the seer's life and lodge, for he was sorely wounded, but not unto death. Relays of young men carried the man of prophetic vision on the march to the next camp.

In our hero's lodge every heart was sorrowful because of *Papamotao's* death. He had been a wise and true friend, full of the manly quality, and the camp

mourned him, but especially his own-family and those of White Buffalo. And yet, as the old man, the father, said:

"We must be thankful we have been spared. My son is unhurt, and his wife is saved from captivity, and while we sorrow, we also rejoice greatly."

The story of the capture of *Nagos*, and her brave deed, and how she had escaped, was told over and over through the camp, and the seer, hearing of it, said:

"Just what you would expect from the wife of White Buffalo. She is a brave, true woman."

When the fine brown horse she had taken was turned in with those belonging to White Buffalo's lodge, the big grey and this horse recognized each other, and Snake Skin said:

"Surely the man you have slain, *Nagos*, is the former owner of your gray horse," and White Buffalo being interested, rode out to look at the warrior, and recognized him as the man he had taken the gray from during the summer trip. And coming back, he said:

"I took his horse, and he attempted to take my wife, but she preferred to stay with me, and so she killed him. Surely I will love her and take care of her while I live."

Thus White Buffalo and *Nagos* were united more strongly than ever, and both were lifted in the hearts of the people by these thrilling experiences.

On into the north country the camp moved, and fresh scenes and new experiences were as the tonic of these people coming out as they were of profound

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sorrows. Nomadism had this influence of making men forget the sorrows and miseries of some spot by its continuous change and constant movements. Then the life of hunting and adventure acted as a stimulant, and there was not time to feel blue. Moreover, in those early days there were no newspapers to constantly bring up death and battle and vice and crime, and rehash these in horrible detail. With these Indians, the dead were seldom spoken of until time had healed the wounded hearts of sorrowing friends. And never in the hearing of the near relatives, unless they brought up the question themselves.

When the large camp reached the timber country on the upper stretches of the Beaver River, it broke up into fractional portions and each went their own way into the wintering grounds which had become theirs by the right of use and occupancy for generations.

Before the separation it was understood by all that White Buffalo would lead out a strong party on the warpath in the early summer of the coming season. Their recent humiliation must be avenged. This was the resolution of the multitude.

The day the large camp broke up to be separate for the winter months, the senior Chief voiced the hearts of his people by addressing *Nagos* as follows:

"Oh, daughter of the North Wind Maker! We are proud of you. The hearts of my people have gone out to you, and we are glad that you are the wife of

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our young war chief, White Buffalo. We will importune the spirits to continue to bless you both." And *Nagos* modestly answered:

"I am glad that I am the chosen wife of White Buffalo, and already I love you all as his people."

White Buffalo's party continued their journey north across the divide into the valley of the Swan. White Buffalo had at once assumed the maintenance of the family of *Papamotao*. These formed part of his own party. And *Nagos* and her mother-in-law were their great consolation. The seer with his family came with them also. The prophet was now able to be about, and every little while his voice of thanksgiving was heard in the camp, and his improvisation was as follows:

The arrows of the Blackfeet are sharp,

Hi-he-ya, ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

But the blood of the seer was clean,

Ho-e-yo, ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

The blow of the Blackfoot was heavy,

Hi-he-ya, ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

But the skull of the seer is strong,

Ho-e-yo, ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

Then the spirits said, "No, he shall live!"

Hi-he-ya, ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

The *Pawakun* said, "Yes, he shall live!"

Ho-e-yo, ho-he-yo-yo-yo.

And soon the camp sang with him, for he was much respected and all were glad that the seer was now becoming strong.

Winter was close, and Snake Skin and his pupil *Niska* were making preparations for the northern trip. The Little Star was always in the thought of Snake Skin, and he was often asked by *Nagos* concerning his silence, for his natural volubility seemed to have left him at times. And he would laugh and tell her some story in the life of her husband which would make her blood-tingle with pride and joy, and she would answer:

"That is good, my brother; but where were you just now? How far north was your spirit wandering? Where are they camped? Tell me, Snake Skin, how is my little sister?"

And he would blush and say he wished he knew. And *Niska* was full of his return to his own people. He had so much to tell them. He had seen so very much that was strange. However, in his heart, he felt he was coming back again, for in the lodge of *Papamotao* there was a maiden to him exceedingly fair, and he had said to himself:

"If it is right and possible for White Buffalo and Snake Skin to come into our lodges and win our girls, then I can surely come south and do likewise."

Thus this youth of the northern Crees did commune with himself, and cast his glance towards the orphan daughter of the famous traveller. In his heart, *Niska* was resolved to make every effort to take this girl north in due time to the lodges of his people.

White Buffalo and his party avoided the scenes of their early autumn hunt, and the spot where their big cache of meat and hides was. For, into these was writ-



ten so much of the life and character of their friend killed in the recent battle. For the sake of the immediately bereaved, and for their own sakes, they picked their course aside from these familiar camping grounds, and moved slowly northward in fresh country.

And surely there was plenty of room. Was not this immense area theirs by continuous occupancy? Their vested rights no man could in righteousness disturb. Theirs was a territorial inheritance. No section stake or township post marked the bounds of their earthly franchise. And now, carefully avoiding the routes of the early autumn, White Buffalo led his friends into pastures fresh, and camped them by rippling streams unknown to many in his lodges. Himself and Snake Skin visited the cache to see that all was safe, and then this was left for future use when needed.

White Buffalo was now in his true element. He was a natural man in the real sense of such a condition. He loved the forests and plains. He saw beauty in creation on every side. To him the manifestations of the great forces were direct from God. His spirit was ready to worship at all times. Such had been his life from his youth up. But now, having Nagos to crown all these glorious gifts, his soul was full of a perennial gladness. Then the wonderful deed and wonderful escape of his beloved made him forever grateful, and in this spirit he sang and hunted and trapped, and worked for the community around him.

Directly he had three families to provide for, his father's and his own and that of *Papamotao* as well, and indirectly and many times it was up to him to help all the rest of his following. Only those who have lived on a continuous game diet, and having nothing else, can understand how much meat a family will go through in a short time. The regular rations of fresh buffalo meat at a Hudson's Bay post in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century was eight pounds per diem to a man. The group of hunters or the one hunter who had from five to fifty souls dependent upon their skill must needs be constantly on the move. The whole camp moved frequently, but the hunter moved constantly. Only a small percentage of these men whose lives were given to hunting became great experts therein. White Buffalo was born to it, and loved the life, and gave himself as one consecrated thereunto.

To compass great distances on foot in short time; to note all signs of animal or human life; to be forever sure of locality, so that from the densest thicket after a most exciting race or fight, to at once determine the shortest and best route to camp; to have studied the habits and manner of life of all creatures within the scope of his environment, and to stand at the head in these abilities, and accomplishments, was the position in which nature and strong practice and ardent inclination had placed our hero. Therefore, the provisioning of a camp rested lightly on his shoulders. At this present

time, he was well seconded by Snake Skin and *Niska*, who were ordinarily good hunters, but who in all the real wisdom and cunning of this craft heartily yielded to White Buffalo as a chief.

It was now the waning period of the falling leaf moon. Winter was near at hand. This was the most difficult season of the year for a moose hunter. All things were crisp, mother earth was everywhere recarpeting. Especially was this the case in the scrub and forest lands. Unless there was a strong wind with its rustle and noise, it was almost impossible for the most cunning hunter to approach. At any rate, this required the greatest amount of patience and extreme caution. Bending, straining, gliding, crawling, listening, peering, watching, now on tip-toe, now on knee, slowly, silently, the hunter made his way towards the spot where his diagnosis of the conditions made him believe his game was. All this was merely deductive reasoning until his keen eye beheld the game. Many men who at other periods of the year were moose hunters altogether failed between the falling of the leaves and the coming of the snows of winter. But not so with White Buffalo. Day after day he went out and was successful.

It was whispered in the camp that his *Pawakun*, the spirit of his dream, "the great wolf," always went with him. His great success was supernatural.

"Even so, let us be thankful," was the hushed rejoinder. Oftentimes Snake Skin and *Niska* and others in the camp were kept busy bringing in the meat and

hides from the kill of the great hunter warrior, who by his modest and ever kind conduct had lived down all envy and jealousy, and now reigned supreme in the faith and affection of his people. White Buffalo had already in his early young manhood become the protector, and to many the provider, in the tents of these people. But to himself, the chief blessing was, he had won *Nagos*, and that now for life she was his beloved wife, the mistress of his lodge and the queen of his heart. And as for *Nagos*, her spirit was forever with him. The ranges of the hills might intervene, the long weary distances might separate in body, but in spirit she travelled with her lord and husband. Busy in camp and lodge as she was in making provision, in dressing hides, in sewing garments and moccasins, etc, still her thought was out with White Buffalo. And his mother saw this and rejoiced, and his father coming in from his traps would smile and say:

"My son is truly blessed. The great spirit has given him a noble wife!" And the influence of the lives of these loving hearts was felt in all the camp. *Nagos* was already mothering the children and youth she was brought into contact with. Such was her nature, as that all humanity appealed to her, and she was always ready to help and cheer.

*Papamotao's* family felt this keenly. She was as a daughter and sister to the bereaved. The seer took great delight in his protege's happiness, and always had a word of loving kindness for *Nagos*.

These were the conditions in this camp, moving as it was slowly down the valley of the Swan, when like a trumpet blast the north wind came strong and chill, and for three nights and two days did blow, and surcharged the heavens and the earth in that north country with cold. Then stilling down to an absolute calm the frost king did his work, and in a single night the rivers and creeks and muskegs and lakes were bridged, and the waters of the Beaver and Swan gurgled beneath their frozen surfaces, and the surprised quantities of air in the depths of the lakes were heard on every hand in loud protesting calls and roars, because of their sudden imprisonment.

Winter had come, and the hearts of Snake Skin and *Niska* did throb with various emotions. A few more nights, and the big rivers and lakes would be passable, and then for the north country with all speed was their programme. *Nagos* twitted them on their unusual cheerfulness. Snake Skin when in camp was either singing or talking all the time. In his heart the voice of the Little Star was forever sounding, and he was all impatience to be away. *Nagos*, coming in, would casually remark:

"Even the little stars are clear and bright tonight," and White Buffalo would smile with supreme satisfaction, and say:

"Little Stars, like Little Mothers, are always bright and beautiful."

Then *Nagos* would blush and bend to the work she had in hand, and Snake Skin would laugh and strike up a hunting song.

The first winter moon was still small when the two young men took the journey out of White Buffalo's camp, and turned their faces steadily towards the star that never moved. They went with the blessing of the whole camp. The seer bespoke them success, but in the meantime a long, hard trip. Said he:

"The people you seek are now far away in the north country, and you will travel long in loneliness before you come to their lodges." However, this did not dampen their ardor, for they were young and full of hope, and the heart of one at least was already in the north, and the younger was longing to be among his own people once more, and tell them the wonderful experiences of the past few months. Many were the messages of love *Nagos* sent to her parents, and she told *Niska* to tell them that she was supremely happy with her husband and in her new environment. White Buffalo said:

"Tell my northern friends that their blessing and gift to me has filled my life with happiness, and all my people are glad for my sake and also for their own. Their daughter has won the hearts of my people. *Nagos* is the chief woman in the lodges of our camp. We will hope to meet them at the appointed rendezvous when the autumn moon is near." And with long springing steps, the young men disappeared.

## CHAPTER XV.

## Snake Skin Meets With a Rival.

**W**INTER is on and the cold is steady, but the snow is not here; and if the era of skating had come to the far west, many a long stretch of clean bare ice over river and lake could have been quickly made by our young travellers. But at this time they did not know about skates. The iron and steel age had not reached them. However, in the ardor of love and affection, they made good time, and after a few days were crossing the bays and winding down the shores of the waters tributary and part of the big Saskatchewan. Days and nights passed in succession, and as yet there were no fresh signs of humanity. They had lived on rabbits and partridges and chicken and muskrat, and incidentally killed a blacktail and cached some of its meat, and rushed on in their quest for the north people. *Niska* said, "if we do not find some one on this side of the big rapid, we will surely find them there." But they came to the big rapids, and the roar and rush of many waters, and the swish and

swing of the winds among the forest trees were all the sounds they heard. No smoke from lodge or camp fire. No barking or howling of dogs. The people were not here. Indeed, the signs thus far were old. And Snake Skin said:

"The seer has told the truth, and the north people are far." But they faltered not, and mending their moccasins, and hunting their way, pushed on into the wild forest land which soon was altogether new to Snake Skin, and at times puzzling to *Niska*. But now, the welcome snow fell upon them, and thenceforth their commissariat would be surer, and the signs of humanity when found, fresh. And singing their travelling hymns and songs of thanksgiving, and Snake Skin ever and anon varying these with his own improvisations of love music, all of which circled and centred about the Little Star, and at times caused *Niska* lots of fun at his comrade's expense, thus they journeyed with the forests growing denser, and the muskegs bigger; and they forever looking and longing for the signs of humanity. One day they came upon a herd of caribou and killed two, and cached as well as they could the meat and hides of these for possible use in the future. Snake Skin said he might have to come back this way.

However, the first moon of the winter waxed and waned and the second one came and was some nights old before they found some Indians who knew the North Wind Maker, but said they had not seen nor yet heard of him for some time. *Niska* thought this strange, and



presently discovered that there was method in their ignorance, for the principal hunter in this camp was an ardent suitor for the Little Star, and he and his people, when they saw Snake Skin with *Niska*, felt certain that he, like White Buffalo, had come to win one of the handsomest and best of their northern girls. So they feigned ignorance and were also slow to welcome the plainsman in their lodges.

"Let him be satisfied with the women of his own country," was their thought. They wanted their young hunter to have the Little Star if possible. This rival of Snake Skin went by the name of *Amiskosis*, the Young Beaver, and so far as hunting ability and general standing went, the Beaver was no mean rival. But of all this Snake Skin was altogether unconscious. The first night after our travellers left this camp, *Niska* said to Snake Skin:

"We will not sleep tonight." "Why, what is the matter?" was Snake Skin's quick answer.

"Well," said *Niska*, "the Beaver does not want you to find where the Little Star lives. He wants her for himself."

And Snake Skin was all aflame at once. "But if she prefers me, and I think she will, what can he do?"

"Why," said *Niska*, "he might try to prevent you reaching where she lives. He might now be on our trail, looking for a chance to kill you."

And Snake Skin laid his weapons handy, and humming a warrior song, thought of the Little Star, and said to himself:

"I will fight for her if need be, but I must live and win her."

And while *Niska* busied himself preparing the evening meal, Snake Skin packed in dry timber for the big camp fire, which they must keep up during the hours of the long winter's night, and when they had supped, keenly watching, forever listening, presently Snake Skin said:

"You will remain in camp, and I will watch the back trail, in case what you have spoken about and feared might come to pass, and this man try to steal on our camp and do me harm. I do not want to hurt him, but if it must be between his life and mine, I love the Little Star, and I will fight for her if I have to. So, my friend *Niska*, you fix my robe and things as if I am sitting in the camp, and you keep up a big blaze, and I will go back."

Accordingly, he detoured and went back in the direction they had come from, carefully scouting as he went. The moon was nearly full, and even in the shade of the pines and spruces there was a measure of light, and in the larger openings of the muskegs it was almost like day. Snake Skin had not gone very far, always keeping aside from the trail he and *Niska* had made, when, in one of the pauses, which he made for acute listening, he detected the approach of someone.

"Ah," thought he, "*Niska* was right; this must be the Young Beaver. Foolish man to act in this way. He has not been trained as I have been on the warpath. He has lived in this northern peaceful country. Myself

and my fellow young men have been more carefully taught in steps that are light and in ways that are cunning. The only difference between this man and myself is, I am armed with bow and quiver, and scalping knife. He has one of those shooting irons with powder and ball, and hunting knife also. Let me watch him."

And sure enough, in the shade of the forest trees, where the shadows were the thickest, carefully and stealthily there approached a man, and when he was near enough Snake Skin made him out to be the Young Beaver. And in his own mind he was discussing the question, "Shall I kill this man, or shall I merely capture him? If I can capture him and disarm him, perhaps that will be sufficient."

So, when his rival had passed him on their trail, Snake Skin slipped in behind, and with greater cunning presently was upon his enemy, and had grabbed the Beaver's gun, and had wrenched it from him, the other having been taken in surprise.

Snake Skin said: "What is my brother wandering so far from his lodge at night for? When we were in your camp yesterday you did not seem so fond of our company. Why are you following us on our journey in this stealthy manner? I do not think that he is my friend who thus tries to creep on to my camp fire. Therefore I must believe that you meant me evil by your own act. Go on to our camp."

And with the gun pointed at his rival, he sent him ahead of him and walked him into their camp, where *Niska* was anxiously awaiting the issue of the hour. He

knew that the Beaver would attempt to kill Snake Skin, but he also knew that Snake Skin was full of resource, and was brave, for he had been with him in battle and beside him several times where there was great danger.

So now he was not greatly astonished to see the Young Beaver come into their camp, Snake Skin's prisoner.

"Sit you down and rest beside our camp fire," said Snake Skin to his rival. "Let us give our brother food that he may eat."

So *Niska* set some food before the Young Beaver, and he, boldly accepting the situation, took out his knife, and calmly made his meal. If we had been there, we would not have thought from the man's actions or visage that he was perfectly conscious of the nearness of death. There stood his rival, armed with his own gun, one that he had carefully loaded for the purpose, if he had the opportunity, of killing Snake Skin. But now Snake Skin, doubly armed, was holding him as a prisoner. Moreover, he had won the affection of *Niska*. So here were two against one. And yet, as he sat and quietly partook of the food set before him, we would have seen no sign of fear in the man. Such was the training of the forest Indian. You might call it fatalism if you please, but when the tables were turned, as they verily were at this time, he would say, "This is fate," and calmly and bravely abide by the conditions.

When the Young Beaver had finished his meal, Snake Skin, who had been watching him all the time, said to him:

"From my friend here I learned tonight that you were my rival. We both want the Little Star. I did not know when I left my southern home that you desired this girl. Her sister, nor yet her brother, never said anything about this. When I came into your camp I came as a friend. My acquaintance with the people of the north had been of the kindest. When I came into this country last winter, with my companion White Buffalo, the hospitality of your people was good; and again, when last autumn we met quite a number of the Northern Crees away south of this, our relations were most friendly, and I was encouraged to come back, and it is on this errand that I now have come to renew acquaintances, and also if possible to win the love of the Little Star. Like my friend, White Buffalo, I will leave this matter to her. If she prefers you to me, I will be greatly disappointed, but being a man, and wanting to be brave, I will return to my own people, in sorrow, but nevertheless still in friendship with the Cree peoples of the north. Tonight you sought to do me harm. To attain your end you would kill me. You deserve to die, and some time ago I would have gladly killed you, but I have been in the company of a great and good man, and he has set me many examples, and I feel that I must follow him in his actions. I will let you live now, and you can return to your camp, but this gun, which you came to kill me with, I will keep to remind me of our encounter."

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"You can start back at once, and my friend and I will also travel on in our quest tonight." And the Young Beaver rose from where he was sitting, and spoke as follows:

"What you have said is true. I came forth from my camp hating you, and my intention was if I could to kill you, but you are stronger than I am. The spirits favor you more than they do me, and I must submit. You have given me my life. I thank you for it. And now I will tell you, before I start back to my own lodge, where the North Wind Maker and his people were camped some twenty nights since."

He then, turning to *Niska*, told him where his parents had been during the last moon. And then he stepped forth, and took his journey back from whence he came. And as Snake Skin had said, our travellers at once set out on their journey. When the morning came they were a long way towards the point indicated by Young Beaver. Neither of them questioned his statements.

'Twas the second day after this that they found the signs of a camp in the vicinity, for here were the tracks of a lone hunter, and all they had to do was to follow him back from whence he had come. Reaching this lodge, which was that of a hunter and trapper, they speedily found from him where the North Wind Maker was now encamped. And the next day, to their great joy, they were in sight of the lodges. Here their welcome was profound. The father and mother delighted

to have their boy home again, and also glad to meet the friend and confidant of White Buffalo. Many wonderful experiences had *Niska* to tell the people of this camp. The messages from White Buffalo and *Nagos* were full of comfort and assurance to them, and Snake Skin was delighted to be in the vicinity of the Little Star once more. He had not been in this northern camp very long when he felt that, while there might be rivals, such as the Young Beaver, yet nevertheless his chance of winning the Little Star was bright. This filled him with joy. The days passed in the life of the people of the time, hunting moose and caribou, and trapping furbearing animals, visiting snares, packing in lynx, and in all this Snake Skin adapted himself as he had been learning to in his previous visits into the life of these people.

We will leave him making their acquaintance, and doing his level best to ingratiate himself with the Little Star and her parents.

CHAPTER XVI.

*He Leads His Followers on a Far Campaign.*

**A**WAY south in the valley of the Swan, and that great big country which is tributary to it, White Buffalo and his camp were busy making provisions and trapping furs. The seer had fully recovered his strength. Nagos was now thoroughly at home with her husband's people, and except that she possessed one of the most energetic and restless hunters in the whole range of the great west at this time, and his constant absences and sometimes long journeys in the ardent pursuit of the life he was leading, her life was full of happiness. Every now and then a messenger would come in from their sister camps. As was the habit of those days, there were runners between the camps, and communication was kept up all through the year. And it was apparent that preparations were going on for the contemplated war enterprise of the coming season. Already the seer had ventured to prophesy, and had told the people that again the spirits would favor White Buffalo as he led their warriors against their enemies. He said:



"The journey will be long, and White Buffalo will have opportunity of seeing more distant country on this trip, but his victory will be strong."

These words of the seer were sent out throughout the groups of camps, and many a warrior felt that he must prepare himself for the long trip, and for this great expedition, which was to bring glory to his people. White Buffalo did his best in the life that was before him and perhaps of all who might anticipate taking part in the coming quest for revenge and glory, he worried the least about it. As we have said before, he was naturally a man of peace, and would greatly prefer the life of the hunter and trapper to that of the warrior.

During the months of this winter he performed several brave deeds. Travelling out on the hunt during the strong winter moon, when the weather was intensely cold, himself and companions, for there were two with him, were caught by a terrible storm, and while all Indians are trained out of the centuries to meet with and stand against nature in her forces, yet, as with other men, some are faint-hearted. And so it was with this little group of men. To reach their camp they had an open country to traverse, and when they were out in the bleakest part, and the storm was at its worst, one of the men began to quail before the intense cold, and said when he felt that his strength was gone, or thought that it was gone:

"Never mind me, let me die here, go on and save your own lives." And White Buffalo gave his arms to the other Indian to carry, and picking this man up car-

ried him a long distance until they found some scrub and sufficient fuel wherewith to make a fire, and thus he saved this man's life. The wonderful strength manifest in this effort raised him in the estimation of the camp. A man possessed of superhuman strength, thus they thought when they spoke of White Buffalo. Also devoid of selfishness in every respect, willing to strain and struggle and be spent that another might have life.

Another day he heard a shout, and running across through the scrub and timber, he found one of his people in the grip of a big bear. The bear had been laired up for the winter, and the Indian had roused him without mortally wounding him, and when White Buffalo came upon the scene, he had to abandon his bow and quiver, and as before depend upon his knife, and again was victorious. He killed the bear, and bound up the wounded man and brought him into camp. When the man was strong enough to tell the story, it was White Buffalo and his wonderful pluck which had saved his life.

Another time men of different camps, who had long been at enmity, and were thirsting for each other's blood, happened to meet in White Buffalo's encampment, and immediately that they learned of the presence of each other they prepared for battle. And just then someone said:

"Oh, that White Buffalo were here! He would prevent this bloodshed. He would prevail upon these men to abandon their foolish enmity."

And then there came a cry through the camp:

"Here he comes!" And immediately he was upon the scene. Rushing in between the combatants, he speedily flung them apart, and then with commanding voice told them to desist. And when they, being overawed by his presence, stood looking at him and glaring at each other, he spoke to them in such a manner as that they became ashamed of their conduct. And presently they followed him to his lodge, and before the day was over they were smoking the same pipe, and pledged to forget the past and be friends for the future.

All these things added to White Buffalo's prestige among the people of his own camp and wherever in other camps these occurrences were told. And thus the winter went on, and it was now the end of the eagle moon, and White Buffalo and Nagos were becoming very anxious about Snake Skin. Where was Snake Skin? Had Snake Skin and Niska found the northern people? The distance was so great, the country was so large, the chances of disaster so many, that they were full of anxious thought concerning their friends.

But one day, while they were looking northward, a boy came on the run back to camp, and his news was that away in the distance there were two men approaching.

"Ah," said White Buffalo, "that will be Snake Skin"; and to their great joy, here were both Snake Skin and Niska. It was unnecessary to tell either Nagos

or White Buffalo that Snake Skin's trip was successful. Notwithstanding the long winter journey, notwithstanding the hardship of making trail through pathless forests and across long stretches of river and lake, in the depth of a northern winter, his every action, his every gesture, the tone of his voice, told of his joy in the purpose of his trip.

And *Niska* was glad to be back. He had longed to come back. This maiden in *Papamotao's* lodge, of course she was the great attraction, but there was also this wonderful new life. He had seen the prairie, he had participated in the great race after the buffalo. He had taken part in the big battle, and he longed to come out again from the quiet northland into these more stirring experiences, which suited his young life. Then here was the home of his sister, and where she was queen.

Many messages of love and good wishes did they bring from the northern people to White Buffalo and *Nagos*. Snake Skin, when the opportunity came, spoke the message which the North Wind Maker had sent by him. Said the North Wind Maker:

"Tell my daughter that her brother has told us how she lives, how wonderfully happy she is, as the wife of White Buffalo. We are truly glad to hear such welcome tidings. And tell White Buffalo that we are proud of him, and we are thankful unto him, and we will forever petition the great spirit and all the

spirits to bless him and his lodge. We send our greetings to all his people. For, after all, like them, we are Crees."

Snake Skin's story in brief was thus:

"I did just about as you did, White Buffalo. I watched my opportunity, and when I had made sure that the Little Star thought of me from her heart, I then spoke to her father, and he, like his older brother, said: 'We will let the moons pass, and as your great friend has pledged himself to bring his wife and meet her people on the spot from whence he took her last autumn, we will promise you that if you come with him at that time, and the heart of our daughter and yours also are as we believe they are today, we will give her to you.' So you see, White Buffalo, I and the Little Star are walking on your trail."

And his friends congratulated him, and *Nagos* said she would be delighted if her sister became the wife of Snake Skin, and if Snake Skin really would bring the Little Star into their camp.

And now these friends who have been so much together in enmity and again in friendship constant, being united, the latter moons of the winter passed quickly. In those days many costly furs brought but little in the exchange that was made. Blankets and strouds and trinkets brought all the way from England by way of Hudson's Bay, and packed and pulled over the many portages up into the interior, were exceedingly costly, and the Indian, trap as much as he might, still

had but very little in excess of his need when he made his barter at the distant post. Piles of beaver, strings of marten and otter and fisher and mink and bear skins, and muskrats and lynx, and his packs may have been big, and the number of them many when he entered the trading post, but when he came forth, having received in exchange cloth and blankets and trinkets, and possibly gun and powder and ball, his pack would be a small one. Thus if he coveted these articles, which the white man brought from across the great waters, he must be forever during the season on the quest. And this was the experience of White Buffalo and his companions, forever setting snares, forever seeking to trap by deadfall marten and mink and fisher, forever going forth with his hunting dogs, treeing his game, and by all the means in his power seeking for the pelts of these valuable animals, but for which, because of the long distance and the costly methods of transport obtaining at the time of which we write, he received but little in return.

And it was spring, and the snows were melting, and the rivers were running free, and the messengers were beginning to pass from camp to camp, and the organization for the coming summer was now on foot.

"We will meet on the banks of the Beaver, where the portage between the two rivers is the shortest."

This was the message that went from one group of lodges to the other all over a wide stretch of country,

and slowly each party began to converge towards the meeting place. In the meantime messengers came from the still farther west, these being sent by the people of the camp our hero and his party had joined for a time during the last season. And the purport of this message was:

"We have heard that you contemplate going on the warpath early this summer. We have heard of your war chief's great success, and our young men desire to join yours and go out with you under White Buffalo's command. If this our wish is pleasing to you, send us word by our messengers."

So White Buffalo sent out runners to the various groups of his own camp explaining this request and asking their opinion, and from every one there came the answer:

"Tell them to come and join us, that is if you think it best." So White Buffalo said to the messengers:

"You can return to your people and tell them that when the egg moon is small the warriors of our camp will meet the warriors of their camp at the place where our people were slain some moons since."

Thus the whole plan of the start for the big war enterprise was arranged. To make ready for their purpose every warrior was now intent. He had his weapons to look after, he prepared his lines, he took pains with his quirt, for in the mind of every one of these men was the thought:

"If I do go forth on foot, I may return on horseback." Then he also must needs importune the spirits; he must go away alone; he must commune in solitude; he must re-consecrate himself; he must renew his vows, and thus the time of preparation was continuous, even up to the day of starting. All the while these men were the commissariat, and the food that their people lived upon was the meat of wild animals. These were migratory, these were subject to storm and sometimes disappearance. So these men had plenty of employment, to feed the camp, to help make provision for the future, to prepare for war. And anyone who has the idea that the Indian of a hundred years ago was a lazy man makes a mistake. The life was strenuous, and exceedingly busy, and in the case of our hero he was forever at work. So the days passed quickly, and every little while runners coming in told him and his party of the converging of the tribes.

And now they are all at the meeting place, and every heart is glad. Feasting and dancing and thanksgiving become the order of the time. In the morning of the day in the large camp the chief instructed the crier, and he went forth, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, and he told the people what the wise men of the camp wished them to do, and would have them to be. His messages were often like short sermons. The philosophy of the ages, the instruction of generations of experience, this was cried with stentorian voice throughout the circles of lodges forming the great camp.



Then during the few days of the living together on the meeting ground, the big council was held, and the orators among the people had their opportunity. Some of these men were intensely eloquent. The language they used was classic, their figures of speech were beautiful. Oftentimes the writer has sat with the assembled crowd and listened to these men who have been described as untutored. But when one understood the language, when one became familiar with the idiom of their speech, then one was filled with amazement, and oftentimes have we said to ourselves:

"Whence have these men this wisdom?"

We have felt rebuked because we had been led to think we were advantaged. We had gone to school, we had had in measure the privilege of education, but here were men who were speaking understandingly and eloquently and logically about matters which were full of thought and wisdom. We sat at their feet and did learn. These wild nomads became to us as our Gamaliels. What wrapt attention these orators would command! The women and the children gathered with the warriors and aged men to listen. The games in the camp were stayed, and with hushed interest every ear was attent to the orator's magnificent address.

But now the war lodge has been erected, and the war dance is being performed, and ~~for several days this~~ big tabernacle is the scene of assembling of all who from this camp intend to set out on this warpath. In White Buffalo's lodge everything is quiet. He is

ready. *Nagos* has finished all preparation, such as she learned was needed. Her heart was full. Oh, this war! How she dreaded it, and yet like women of her type, she would have her husband go. She would not lift a finger to keep him at home. She would say to herself, "How can I let him go?" and again she would say to herself, "I want him to go." In this anomaly of feeling she was even like the women of her type throughout all the ages. Shrinking and yet intensely brave; timid, but full of ardent pluck.

Snake Skin would comfort her by telling how she need not worry, White Buffalo was invulnerable; his dream, his *Pawakun*, would protect him.

"He," said Snake Skin, "your husband, *Nagos*, is a good man. He performs all his vows. He neglects not even the smallest matter. His *Pawakun* is forever pleased with him, and the Great Good Spirit cannot help but love your husband, for he is truly his child, his obedient child. So, my sister, drive away your fears, believe that your husband will come safely home, and you will love him all the more, and be happier with him because of his great accomplishments. As for myself, I am glad to go. I know how White Buffalo felt when he was hoping to win you, how he wanted to try himself, and see if he was worthy. I feel like that. I am always thinking about the Little Star, and I want to go forth and be brave and true, and I want to come back and feel that you and all your friends will be proud of me. And I will be worthy of

going into the north next autumn with you, and when we come back, if the spirits will it, ah, then I will have the Little Star with me."

Thus Snake Skin talked and cheered up the Little Mother. In the meanwhile the war song was stimulating the multitude, and presently the time set arrived, and on the morrow fully half of the men of this camp would go forth on the quest for their enemies.

CHAPTER XVII.

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What Transpires on the Long Warpath.

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**I**T WAS a most enthusiastic following which went out with White Buffalo, and while many hearts were sad, still the multitude sang the war song until the whole party had disappeared behind the timber bluff. White Buffalo's arrangement with the senior chief and council was that these should move on out to the great plains, and, as the buffalo herds might permit, go to the west, up the Chain of Lakes river, or even over to the open water, the south branch, and in these vicinities await the return of the warriors.

As per appointment, our hero led his men straight to the scene of the autumn massacre of Crees. He made the Seer and Snake Skin his seconds in command. He said to the seer:

"Never mind venturing your spirit until the others join us," and himself sought a sign of approbation from his *Pawakun*, who appeared in his usual form when White Buffalo and Snake Skin were away far in advance of their party, and after a long run had stopped

on the brow of a small knoll to rest, when behold! on the summit of another hill, a short distance away, there appeared the big wolf, and as the latter silently looked upon the young men, these could not but feel that his blessing was upon them.

"Ah, said Snake Skin, "you, my friend, are indeed greatly favored among men."

"Yes," was the answer, "when that I have won the love and true friendship of such men as you and *Kosopachekao*, and my *Pawakun* gives his blessing on our enterprises."

And, as if to give emphasis, White Buffalo saved the life of one of his followers that very afternoon. This man had tracked a big cinnamon bear, and coming close enough, as he thought, he had let an arrow fly at the bear, but only succeeded in wounding the brute, and the bear in turn attacked the Indian. He was having the best of the fight when White Buffalo and a few of his men came upon the scene, and before the others could think what to do our hero was in the tussle with only his knife, and succeeded in killing the bear and saving his man. The leader's great agility and strength very much impressed his followers, and was looked upon by all as a significant and prophetic sign of the success of their party.

On the fourth day out they neared the scene of the massacre, and saw that the western men were here before them, and these now hailed them with gladness. This western contingent was under the command of the

champion runner whom White Buffalo had left the summer before. This man at once gave himself and party over to White Buffalo, who made the Antelope, which was the runner's name, like the seer and Snake Skin, a member of his council.

Here they spent the rest of the day in religious and war dances, and singing consecration hymns, and with the dawn of the next morning set their faces to the distant mountains, and the sunset. White Buffalo now found himself at the head of some three hundred men, and to train and discipline these he made them into four companies, the seer and Snake Skin and Antelope and himself each commanding a fourth, and each to take the scouting and guarding of the whole party in daily and nightly succession. Moreover, each guard was to do the hunting of the time. Fortunately, the buffalo were pretty well scattered over the country through which their line of march took them. At one of their camps the seer went into a trance, and sent his spirit out in advance, and when he came to he told the listening crowd that their road would be a long one, that not until they would have travelled several nights beyond the place of the fight of last season would they come to fresh signs of the enemy. However, while all this might be true, White Buffalo kept his men under strict rule, and was forever watchful of their whole movement, and himself was constantly on the vanguard, and oftentimes scouting alone. While Snake Skin had brought the gun, he took from the

Beaver, he had also his bow and quiver, and was thus doubly armed, but White Buffalo still depended on his bow. And it was while on this trip, and when they were on the north side of the beautiful woods range of hills now named the Cypress, that he performed the wonderful archery which made him famous as the great expert shot of his day and time. While scouting ahead as usual he encountered and killed three immense grizzlies, and did this by killing one on each day for three consecutive days. The first one was leisurely crossing the plain between two little islands of scrub timber when White Buffalo saw him and ran to intercept him, and now feeling almost sure of his aim and strength, he called to the big bear:

"Hello, you great father of bears, where are you going?" And the huge fellow raised on to his hind feet, and standing erect peered around to discover the strange calls he had heard, and then our hunter took his chance and let his arrow fly and it went straight into the heart of the grizzly and in a little while he laid him down and died. And White Buffalo, running to a knoll, signalled to some of his following, who, coming to the spot, marvelled at their leader's pluck and skill, and then went to work to skin and cut up the bear, and packed the best part of the meat into camp, and the monster feet and claws were beheld by the whole party. These were trophies any man might be proud of even in these days of strong and rapid shooting firearms.

The next day Snake Skin was with White Buffalo, and they came on the fresh tracks of a giant grizzly, and Snake Skin said: "You had better let this one pass." But White Buffalo picked a couple of arrows, and gave his bow a strong pull, and answered:

"Our men are fond of bear's meat, and it is good for a change. I will run on this one's track for a little way. You can watch for men, while I see where this big one has gone."

And away he went on the quick run after the grizzly, and Snake Skin scouted and also kept his friend in sight. And around the camp that night he told the story.

"We had run perhaps twenty arrows' flight, when from the top of a little hill there was the bear crossing the valley ahead of us. White Buffalo was now some four or five arrows' flight ahead of me, and we were both in full view of the bear if he should turn and look, and to make him do this my friend shouted:

"Yoho, you ancient chief of bears! Stop and let us exchange the news!" And White Buffalo began to sing a hunting song, and the bear turned around and came straight for him, and then White Buffalo shouted, and the bear stood up, and my friend sent his arrow right into his heart. Oh, it was a great shot, and the bear jumped towards us, but fell and died when he had come but a little way. I tell you, young men, there is no man in all this land who can shoot as straight or kill as far as our young chief."



The next day the Antelope and the seer were with the leader away on in advance, and the seer went aside into a clump of scrub, and presently came out on the jump with another big grizzly at his heels. And again White Buffalo came to the rescue and killed the bear and saved the prophet's life.

That night the killing of the third bear was told by the Antelope. Said he:

"We were moving along in the shade of the hill and in the coulée which ran up its side there were woods, and the seer said, 'I will look for red willows,' and he went into the woods and then in a little while we heard a crashing and noise, and here was our friend running for his life, and close behind him there came a *Mistaya*, the first one I had seen. I tell you he looked fierce and big, and I felt like running, but this man beside me pulled his bow so quick, and shot the bear and made him stumble, and again he shot the bear, and then handing me his bow ran in between the Seer and the bear. But so true and strong had been his shots that by this time the bear was dying, and soon he fell and was dead. I can tell you, young men, this is no common man we are following. He is gifted above his fellows. I am proud to be in his company, and now am truly glad that such a man as he did win the race from me last summer."

Thus White Buffalo was all the while strengthening himself with his people, and Snake Skin and the seer were loyally enhancing his prestige every day. All

this time our hero was acting under a sense of duty, and not from choice. His *Nagos*, his home lodge, his own land of forest and plain, the interminglings of the fountainheads of the Beaver and Swan, and their multiple tributaries, these were the voices calling him. But his people needed him and the ideals and creeds of the time demanded this service, and he was obedient thereunto.

Steadily, day after day, our party climbed the easy slope of the great continent, always keeping to the south side of the big river system which makes the south branch, or as the Crees termed it, the open water. They were now in the country of the cactus and rattlesnake, and many of these young men had never seen either of these until now, and while the older men cautioned them to be watchful, nevertheless one was bitten by a rattler. But the seer opened his medicine bag and sang his medicine song, and in the meantime had his patient to eat some of a strange root, and also pounding up some other of his medicine roots, he applied this as a poultice to the bite, and in a little while the young man was himself again. The seer told the crowd that this medicine was discovered by a war party of Crees whose attention was drawn to a battle between a rattler and a lizard, and they saw the lizard when bitten by the snake rush for a certain root, and digging this up eat it, and come back and renew the fight, and eventually kill the snake. Thus this antidote to the snake's venom was discovered by the Crees.

*Niska*, who was now for the first time in the history of the *Muskegoes*, as also in his own life, making one in this war party, felt that this was indeed a new world. Everything was strange, but Snake Skin was faithfully watching over him, and then he had his own brother-in-law, his *Neesta*, this great man, who if not for his own sake, would for the sake of the Little Mother forever look after him; he, like White Buffalo, was testing himself, and wondering what would happen when they came upon the enemy. However, unlike our hero's first war expedition, there were none to scoff at *Niska*. He was too near the leader and his friend Snake Skin and was thus favorably circumstanced. But nevertheless, the lad wondered within himself what might be his experience. In the meantime he was most obedient to both White Buffalo and Snake Skin, and was gaining in knowledge and experience every day.

It came to pass, that a trial of his courage was close at hand. "*Niska*, you scout away ahead this morning. Be very careful, and come back to us if you find anything strange."

And the young man ran off, glad to have the opportunity of possibly discovering some sign of the enemy, and learning in this new field what these older men are now so familiar with. He had gone a long distance and had not seen a sign, and was hiding in a dust pan near the brow of a hill, watching keenly, when presently he saw something moving. At first what he saw seemed a part of the next hill, but focusing

his vision he saw that if it was the hill that portion of it was moving. Then he waited until whatever it was was out of sight. Then he made his way across the valley as quick as he could, and scouted up where he could command the country beyond, and he saw a man. And he watched him until he made sure that this was no one in his party, and he followed this man until the shape of the country and the many little hills permitted him to approach him close. And he saw that he was not a Cree, he must be a Blackfoot. He was an enemy. He was one of these himself and party had come out to look for. And now his heart throbbed within him. Here he was alone. He did not know whether this man had seen any of his party. If he was sure that this Blackfoot had not seen any of the Crees, he would gladly have let him alone, but he said to himself:

"Perhaps he has discovered our party. If he has, then our presence in this country will very soon be known in any camp that may be ahead of us."

Thus *Niska* puzzled, somewhat afraid to attack the Blackfoot, and yet even more afraid to risk the Blackfoot bearing tidings of the Crees into the Blackfoot camp. He knew very well what either White Buffalo or Snake Skin would do in such a case, and at last he said:

"And I must do the same. \**Keyam*, even if he kills me, I must try to kill him."

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\* *Keyam*—"Never mind."

And now he began to croon to himself his war song, and look for a place where he might intercept the Blackfoot, and thus he crouched and ran, and crawled and drew himself along the ground and ran until he passed the Blackfoot and was athwart his course, and with his bow strung, and several arrows ready, he made his stand and watched his chance, and as the Blackfoot came near he pulled his bow and shot his man. While he mortally wounded the Blackfoot, still the Blackfoot had strength enough to pull his bow and send several arrows at *Niska*. One of these slightly wounded him, but in the meantime he let fly another arrow, and this time his aim was surer, for his blood was up, and the Blackfoot fell, and *Niska* ran in and stood beside him as he died. He had heard about men being scalped, but he had never seen one scalped. He had never known any of his people to do any scalping, and he shrank from it, and he said:

"I will leave this man here now, and I will run further on, and take a circle and find out if I can whether there are any more Blackfeet in this vicinity." And so he left the dead man without touching him, and made a big circle, and discovered no sign of any other human being. Then he came back, and this time he took the weapons of the Blackfoot, and some of his apparel, but did not touch his scalp. Then he retraced his way until he met his party, and told them what he had seen, and the weapons and the clothing were evidences of what he had done.

And Snake Skin praised his pluck, and White Buffalo coming up said, "My *Neesta* has a brave heart," and *Niska* felt greatly comforted. And still his whole being was under the shock of having killed a man. He felt in measure even as *Nagos* had when she killed a man.

However, the boy's experience gave him a standing. He had scoured a vast country. He had covered immense ground. Whether this Blackfoot had discovered this war party or not, they did not know, but now they were sure that he could not bear the tidings of their approach. That evening they came to the spot, and some of the old warriors at once said:

"*Niska*, scalp this man. You killed him fairly, his scalp is your trophy." And *Niska* held back and Snake Skin said:

"Let him alone. If you want this man's scalp, take it yourselves." And thus the environment of men's natures was plainly seen. What was commonplace to one was an awful thing to another. And now White Buffalo felt the necessity of great caution, and he sent his best men on into the front, and himself scouted in advance, and the main body of the party moved during the night. And when they were up in that country near the mouth of the river that comes from the chief mountain which is now called the St. Mary's, they felt that they were in the proximity of a camp. And here again White Buffalo, by his extra swiftness and wonderful archery prevented their being

discovered by a large camp. Two of the Blackfeet stumbled upon them, and then, recognizing the Cree, made a detour for their camp, and they were seen by one of the Cree scouts, and he gave the alarm, and though the Blackfeet were now far in the lead, White Buffalo and some other took after them, but he outdistanced the rest, and was alone when he came within arrow-shot of the Blackfeet. And they, seeing that he was alone, and so far ahead of his companions, turned to fight him, but they knew not that this man's arrow flew far, and was sent straight. And while their arrows fell short of him he presently shot both of them so that they, like their companions on other trips, became not the bearers of tidings to their friends.

"And now," said White Buffalo, as he stood beside the scouts of his enemy, "we must be careful, we have come so far that we cannot let these people know of our approach, and make a failure of this expedition."

So he redoubled his vigilance and moved his party with all care. And soon in came the news of a large camp. They were across the chief mountain river, and camped in the bottom, and the hillside was covered with their ponies, and the lodges were many. This was the report. So White Buffalo, gathering his party under cover, said to them:

"Doubtless all three men that we have found and have killed belonged to this camp, and it would appear that notwithstanding all our care they discovered us, and were going home to tell the news. We have

stopped them. But their absence will soon be missed, so we must make haste and attack this camp as quickly as we can."

And he and Antelope scouted as near as they could and took in the size of the camp, and its situation, and White Buffalo made up his mind as to how they might approach it. And then they returned to their following and determined to make the charge the next morning.

From what they saw at the camp they felt that thus far their presence in that country was not known. When night came they moved up close and then White Buffalo told his men of the plan. Snake Skin and Antelope were to approach this end of the camp and himself and the seer were to come around to the far end, and thus they were to await the coming day. Said he to his men:

"They are stronger than we are in numbers. But if the spirits help us, and we can dash at them before they discover our presence, then we will have the advantage. So be brave, my men, we have come far, many nights farther than I have ever been from the land of our fathers. Very few in this party have ever come so far away from the lodges of our people as we are now. Let us remember why we have come, to punish our enemies, to avenge the death of our friends, and if we live take home glory to our people. Let every man commune with himself tonight, and in quietness let us go to our places and with the break of the day tomorrow we will charge our enemies."



And all listened and all were hushed and all felt that the struggle was near. During the night they made ready, and by the first dawning of the coming day they were placed and all this time there was no sign that the enemy had any knowledge of their presence. The seer sang his hymn, and took out his war cap and walked in and out among the warriors and encouraged them with quiet words, and White Buffalo sat and thought of *Nagos*, and felt that his heart was with her, and said to himself:

"I am not a fighting man, and yet I must call in my wandering spirit, and for the sake of my people and for the sake of my manhood, and for the sake of *Nagos* I must be brave."

And Snake Skin away across the valley said to himself: "If I live tomorrow, and the spirits help me, I will feel that I am worthy, and with a brave heart will go into the north land this coming autumn and claim the Little Star."

Indeed, he was thinking more about the Little Star than he was about the battle. And not until some one said:

"Ah, there is the morning star," did Snake Skin come back from following the Little Star in thought to the duty that was now upon him, for in a little while he would have to lead his men in the rush upon the camp.

It was a quiet night, and up and down the valley the tramping of horses and the occasional neighing of one here and there, and the bark of a dog, and out

on the hills the howling of wolves and the shrill calls of the coyotes, and then intervals of stillness. And in these did our party send signs across from one division to another. The owl hooted, and was answered. The wolf howled, the coyote barked. Thus White Buffalo and Snake Skin and Antelope and the Seer sent their messages one to the other. And the day sky appeared, and every minute made the scene lighter, and now objects could be discerned. The painted lodges, the spotless white on some, and presently the whole valley rang with the war cry from hundreds of throats and dashing down upon the camp on every side came the Crees, and the Blackfoot warriors signalled to each other, and the whole camp was aroused, and the battle was on.

The Blackfeet, as was their plan and purpose, had the cut banks of the river to rush down and use as barricades. But long ere many of them reached these favored spots they were caught, and with war club and knife they were slain. The Blackfeet fought bravely, but the Crees' rush was fierce and the Blackfeet lost heavily. But, as before, when the enemy got under shelter the battle ceased. It would be foolish bravery, was the thought of the warrior of those days, to rush in on men who are behind a barricade. Only occasionally in the history of Indian fights was this done, and then it was when the attacking party was in great multitudes. Our war party was satisfied with their slaying of the enemy ere these could reach shelter.

And so with scalps, and loot, and horses, and as the sun was climbing the heavens, they retired from the battlefield, and gathering up over the hill, they began to count their number. And then they found that some of their friends were absent. They had many scalps, but they had bought them dearly.

As the warriors gathered up here were White Buffalo and Snake Skin, but look as they would, neither Antelope nor the Seer nor yet *Niska* could be found. This created a great feeling of consternation in the minds of both White Buffalo and Snake Skin. Their brother leaders, had they been killed in the fray? And young *Niska*, how could either of them go back to the Little Mother and her brother missing? And they thought of the people in the farther north to whom they both felt in large sense responsible, and while they troubled and were in great sorrow, suddenly there appeared, approaching through the hills, a single rider, driving a bunch of horses before him.

"Who can this be?" was the exclamation, and Snake Skin, jumping on a horse, made him fairly fly out in the direction of the approaching rider. Then he whirled his horse and sent him to and fro as a signal to White Buffalo and the crowd that this was one of their own party, and then he came back on the jump even as he had gone, and shouted to White Buffalo:

"It is your brother-in-law. The foolish boy has been away alone!"

And sure enough, here was *Niska*, with a bunch of horses, and no scalps.

"What!" said White Buffalo, "were you not in the fight? Did you not rush into our enemy's camp with the rest of us?"

"Yes I did," said *Niska*, "but after fighting some, I saw these two horses," and he pointed to a pair of ponies that were charms in horseflesh, "and when I saw them I coveted them. So I stopped fighting and drove this bunch of horses out, and now I am glad to be with you again."

"Well, we are all glad to have you back," was the answer that came from many mouths. "But where are the scalps you should have taken?"

"Oh, I did not take any scalps. If you go down into the camp, and see any Blackfeet dead with their scalps on, you can say *Niska* killed these."

And now everybody became concerned as to the other two leaders. And White Buffalo quickly determined to return to the scene of the fight. He left his party to remain on guard with the horses and loot they had taken and himself and Snake Skin scouted down into the camp, and hunting around among the tents they did see several dead Blackfeet with their scalps on, and Snake Skin very quickly and deftly removed these and stuck them in his belt. "For," said he, "I want to prove to our people that *Niska* did in no wise shun the fight. These are his victims."

While they were searching for their friends, they heard an owl hoot up a coulee, and White Buffalo answered it, and again the owl hooted. Then they ran over to where the sound came from, and here, to their joy, they found the Antelope, severely wounded, but quite alive. Several arrows had pierced him, and one had entered so near the joint of his knee as that he could not do more than drag himself along the ground. And thus he had crawled away from the scene of the fight, and hidden for the time being where his friends found him.

"I am all right," said he, "but for this wound in my leg. As to the rest of the wounds the enemy gave me, all the harm they have done me is that I have lost a lot of blood, and I was both weak and lame when I came here."

And White Buffalo said, "Snake Skin, you go back and bring some young men to help carry our friend, and I will go to the river and bring him some water to drink."

And this they proceeded to do quickly, for they were close to where the enemy was in barricade, and no one could tell how soon these might make a sally.

While White Buffalo was scouting to the river for water, he thought he heard peculiar singing where the Blackfeet were, and listening keenly, he said to himself:

"This is strange. That voice is exactly like *Kosopachekao's* voice, but surely he cannot be alive in the enemy's camp. If they have taken him prisoner it is very strange."



However, he determined to wait for the arrival of Snake Skin with help, and then, securing the water, he scouted back to assuage the thirst of his friend. Having given the Antelope the drink, and thus strengthening him, he proceeded to bind up his wounds as best he could. Then he told the Antelope about the strange singing he had heard over among the Blackfeet. He did not think there could be two voices exactly alike, and he was almost sure that he had heard the Seer chanting one of his hymns.

"Well," said Antelope, "I would not be surprised, for he is a wonderful man in his way. He may have cast a spell over those Blackfeet."

"Perhaps he has," said White Buffalo, "and when our party comes up, and we have you safely away, I am going to find out, for if our prophet is alive, we must rescue him if we can."

And now Snake Skin came up with his relief party, and White Buffalo told off four young men who, taking the corners of a robe, lifted the wounded Antelope therein, and proceeded with the double duty of carrying him to the rendezvous, and scouting their way in so doing. And now White Buffalo and Snake Skin, and the rest of the young men he had brought with him, stealthily approached the Blackfeet and silently listened. And again they heard the tones of this voice, and Snake Skin said to White Buffalo:

"That must be *Kosopachekao*."

"Bark like a coyote," said White Buffalo to Snake Skin, and a low, quiet bark was the answer, thrown in between the notes of his chanting. Thus the Seer was now conscious of the presence in the vicinity of his friends. Then White Buffalo determined to challenge the Blackfeet, and he called out:

"Are you there, *Kosopachekao*?" And now in distinct tone came back the answer:

"Yes, I am here."

"Are you well?" was the next question.

"Yes, as well as one can be in the hands of his enemies."

"Are you wounded?"

"No, not a scratch on me."

"Well, why don't you come out then and come to us?"

"Just wait a little, perhaps I will," was the answer. And now, in strong, sonorous tones, the Seer began to intone a hymn, and as his voice grew louder and more solemn, presently those listening could tell that the Prophet was moving about among the enemy. And while they listened and wondered what this strange man would do, presently his head appeared above the bank. Presently he was out in full view and approaching them, and then they saw the Blackfeet here and there looking at the Prophet, and verily these seemed to be spellbound, and did not raise a weapon or an arm to stay his course, and thus the Seer came towards his friends, and soon was once more among them.

And now White Buffalo saw fit to send his voice in turn across in to the enemy's camp.

"We thank you, O brave men of the Blackfeet people, for giving us our friend alive and untouched. Even as he was with us yesterday, so he is now today unharmed. We thank you for sparing his life, and while we are enemies and doubtless may come together in battle in the future, yet I pledge you my word who am the leader of the Crees who attacked your camp this morning, that we will never forget your act of kindness today."

And then the Seer began to sing and White Buffalo and Snake Skin and the young men who had come with him joined in the song, and thus in full view of the Blackfeet warriors they wended their way up the hill to their party, and reaching these there was great rejoicing. All the leaders were here; Antelope was badly wounded, but not unto death, unless any of his wounds should prove to have been poisoned, and to offset this possibility the Seer went to work immediately with his poultices and herbs and incantations. In the meanwhile White Buffalo and Snake Skin counted up their party, and found that their total loss so far was fifteen. They had killed and scalped more than a hundred of the enemy, and now they made preparation for the start homeward. Those who were wounded and could not travel on horseback were put on travois. The Antelope was placed on one of these, and several young men took it in turn to lead the horse that drew him and



also lift the end of the travois in rough places. Because of the wounded, their movement was necessarily slow, and White Buffalo kept a strong rear guard as they journeyed, and because of his previous experiences he had scouts out on both front and flank. Slowly and carefully they journeyed eastward, caring for their wounded, and losing as little time as possible, for every man was anxious to reach home.

They hoped that their people might have come a good long ways westward. The signs were that the buffalo had travelled northward and therefore the chance was that their people might now be somewhere along the banks of the south branch, the Open Water River. They had very little trouble as to commissariat. Every day buffalo and antelope and deer were their prey. Snake Skin had very soon made known to the company that these scalps were taken from the heads of men whom *Niska* had slain. And the latter was interviewed around the camp fire as to why he had killed men and yet had not scalped them, and he answered:

"So far as I know, my people never scalped any man, and I could not bring myself to do it. I was even sorry to kill anybody, but I came with my brother-in-law and my friend, Snake Skin, on this war party, and I went into the battle with you, and almost before I could think I was killing men. But I did not scalp them, and if ever I go on the warpath again and should happen to kill anybody I believe I will not scalp them."

And no man derided *Niska* or laughed at him as a tenderling, for they knew he was brave, and they accepted his feeling in this matter.

Snake Skin said: "White Buffalo's wife will never paint, and her brother *Niska* will never scalp," and as was the condition of the thought of these men, they took no exception. We have said before in this narrative that perhaps nowhere among men have we found more consideration for the other's faith than among these Indian peoples. At one of their camps the Seer told the story of his being made prisoner. Said he:

"I was in a group of Blackfeet, and I began to sing, and one of them must have hit me on the head, for when I came to I was with them behind their barricade. They had dragged me into it, and I was alive. Because of this I was greatly surprised, that I should be with these people alone and alive, filled me with wonderment, and as soon as I became fully conscious of where I was, I began to sing. And they looked at me, and I expected every moment that they would kill me, but they did not. Some of the chiefs and leading men, as I thought, came around where I was, and they looked at me, and I looked at them, and I sang, and I never stopped singing, and I looked at them and they looked at me, and then as the day passed I kept singing and looking at them, and presently I heard Snake Skin's call, and I answered. Then I heard White Buffalo's voice in question, and I sang louder, and answered as I sang.

Then I rose up and they made way for me and I came out from among them, and not one tried to stop me. And here I am with you."

And the young men looked at him, and the older men looked at each other, and it was accepted by all that *Kosopachekao* was in favor among the strong spirits.

They had taken a large number of horses, and articles of apparel, and some splendid robes, and saddles and many lines, and thus with scalps and much loot they journeyed homeward, White Buffalo forever watchful and every man in his party strictly obedient unto him. Among the horses they had taken were some splendid buffalo runners. Both of those which had caught *Niska's* fancy turned out to be well trained hunting horses, and Snake Skin said to him:


"You are very lucky, my young brother. You have done brave deeds, and you have now in possession some good horses, and you are still a boy. What will you do when you become a man?"

And *Niska* laughed. "What are you going to do, Snake Skin, this fall? Are you not going away north? Are you not even now thinking about the smallest and littlest star in the heavens? Well, if you will make long journeys, and go to war and run many risks, and do what you call brave deeds for the sake of somebody, perhaps I will do the same."

And Snake Skin patted his protégé on the shoulder and said:

"You are wonderful people, you children of the forest and water."

Nothing strangely stirring took place as they travelled eastward. Hunting their way, living on the moving game which did abound in the land. Buffalo by the thousands, sometimes by the scores of thousands; antelope in flocks and in small bands covering the plain; black and white-tailed deer along the streams, and wherever there were patches of timber; moulting ducks and porcupines; thus these men hunted and feasted and travelled across the vast stretches of this upland country. Owing to their one diet life, the wounded were healing quickly. Out in the open, and flesh cooked for the most part over the fire without any kettle or pan, thus these men seemed to have clean blood, and it was remarkable how quickly their wounds healed. Already the Antelope was moving around camp on crutches. As soon as they had come to timber, White Buffalo had made for him a pair of crutches. And now, with the wounded healing they were hopefully travelling homeward, and making good time, and one day an advance scout came rushing back with the news that hunters from the east had been running buffalo two nights before beyond those hills. This inspired everyone with hope. "These may be our people," and they moved on quickly. But as all experienced warriors knew they must now watch more keenly, for in all probability war parties might be seeking the very



camp which was their home. However, three days afterwards a scout came in and told them that a large camp of Crees was in sight. Said he:

"I did not go near enough to make sure, but I think they are our people."

And sure enough, so it happened, that this was the camp from which they had come. Indeed, two large camps had joined, and here were our friends of last season once more together, and eagerly awaiting the return of their warriors. Three days before they arrived White Buffalo's mother laughingly said to *Nagos*:

"Why, my child, what makes you so bright today? You are singing all the time. You have been running here and there, you seem full of life. What is the matter with you?"

And *Nagos* said: "My husband is coming. I saw him. He is not hurt. A number have been slain, but he is well, and Snake Skin is well, and before many nights they will be here."

"Oh," said the mother, "I do hope your dream will come true."

"Nay, nay, my mother," said *Nagos*, "it was not a dream. I was awake, and in a little time my spirit went far, and I saw my husband, and I tell you they are near."

And the mother told her husband, and their hearts were cheered, and sure enough one of their scouts came in and said:

"A large party is approaching, and they are all on horseback. I do not know whether they are friends or foes." And the chief said:

"Make ready!" And the camp made ready, and then another scout came in and his story was definite.

"Our friends are coming, our warriors have been successful. They went forth on foot, I saw them and they are all on horseback, and they are driving more horses. They have been victorious!"

And the whole camp, which a little while ago was on the defensive, was now full of expectant joy. And in came the warriors singing their song of victory, which sounded all through the lodges, and the sick and the faint and the aged, and the little ones all took part. Their men had been victorious. The spirits had smiled upon them, and brought the most of them home. Here and there there was a wail. Here and there the mother lifted up her voice in anguish, and other mothers took up the cry in sympathetic note, but the volume of the camp ever and anon would break out in triumphant song. "White Buffalo and our young men have brought us glory! White Buffalo and our young men have brought many scalps! White Buffalo and our young men have brought in many horses! We are avenged on our enemies! Let us sing, let us dance, and be glad!"

These were the words of the senior chief of the large camp, and everyone said:

"It is true, let us be glad!"



CHAPTER XVIII.

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The Great Religious Festival.


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**A**FTER a few days the camp moved by common consent into a selected spot, and everyone prepared for the great thirst dance, the religious festival of the year. Many were under vow, and this annual festival gave them the opportunity for the fulfilment of their vow. This religious gathering had been for ages the custom of these people. It was the occasion for the fulfilment of vows and an opportunity for the more religious of this pagan people to make sacrifices, and to endure self-inflicted torture and hardship in meeting the requirements of the traditional faith of their fathers.

As the season for this approached, some leading men sent tobacco messages to different camps near and far, intimating that the time had come for the annual festival, and suggesting the most desirable locality. These tobacco messages were carefully worded and wrapped in the presence of trusty couriers, who would make all haste in reaching their several destinations,

often travelling night and day, and generally on foot. When they reached the camps to which they were sent their message was received with solemn dignity and themselves treated with hospitable respect. Then in quiet council the tobacco was unwrapped, and the proposition discussed. If assented to, the tobacco was smoked, and the head man commissioned to send a return message signifying assent and willingness to come to the appointed place.

And now from long distances these camps would move steadily towards the location indicated. The big meeting, the rites to be observed, the blessings that would ensue, the character and prestige and the temporal and supernatural ability of the leaders expected to attend to all these things were the constant topics of conversation of all the converging camps. The conjurer rehearsed his medicine hymns; sorted over his medicine bag, fixed his rattles and bells, and retouched his costume. The warrior went over in memory his bravest deeds, and most notable exploits, and carefully arranged his war dress, mending here, and fixing there, and generally burnishing up for this grand chance for glorious display. And the women and belles of the camp, notwithstanding all the work of constant moving and making extra provisions to be used during the festival, missed no opportunity to make ready their finery for special use on this great occasion, though all they might have would be contained in a small bag made of calf skin, and would consist mainly of beaded leggings and





shoulder straps, and much brassed leathern girdle. In the meantime the originator of this concentrative movement was having a hard time of it. The responsibility of the whole gathering was upon him, and to prepare himself for his duties he fasted and thirsted, left his home and camp, and stayed nights and days alone in cold and wet, with little or no covering for his naked body. He petitioned and prayed to the spirits and seemed to commune with them. He grew wan and wasted physically, but he developed spiritually, and there seemed to come to his very appearance that which was supernatural. As the time drew near this was intensified. There was a weird mystery about this man, which was felt through all the camp.

The conjurers prepared their medicines, and night and morning before the camp moved the drums beat furiously, dancing lodges were erected at every encampment, and the four orders of dancers took their turns, the "wood partridges," the "prairie chickens," the "medicine rattlers," and the "kid foxes," each in turn to vocal and drum accompaniment went through their evolutions of movement. Sacrifices were got ready and consecrated, and amidst night and day alarms from the enemy and all the necessary hunting for the maintenance of the camp, this work of preparation went on for days, and sometimes weeks, and now the chosen spot is reached which is accomplished almost at the same time, for the scouts and couriers have kept the different camps in touch and the movement of each has been

governed for the purpose of reaching the rendezvous about the same day. The conjurers and medicine men convene in one part of the camp, the warriors in another, and while the priests and medicine men intensify their petitions and incantations, the warriors go out to scout the country and search for a suitable tree to be used as a central or spirit tree.

A sharp watch is kept for the scouts, and when these are seen returning to camp, the medicine men form in procession with their "chief-pro tem," the present originator of the whole movement, at their head, and march through camp singing and incanting and speaking in unknown tongues. The chief medicine man holds a big pipe with a sacred stem in his hands, and with this he points heavenward and earthward, and all around, following the sun, and thus in solemn aspect and with dignified movement, these high priests of an old faith march out of camp to meet the warriors.


Now comes the crucial time for this chief medicine man. If these warriors accept the pipe from him, then the success of his venture is assured, but if they do not take the pipe as he offers it to them, the whole scheme is a failure, and a new chief priest, and a new location, will have to be sought. No wonder it is a tense moment for the would-be high priest of this great gathering.

The two companies draw near to each other, and while the priests are chanting in doleful notes petitionary and sacrificial hymns, and the warriors are lustily singing songs of victory, the whole camp is hushed in

silent expectation as to the outcome. The warriors know the issue lies with them, and carry themselves accordingly. In all the pride and pomp of martial dignity and costume, they sit their picked steeds and await the priest's action. This personage is now almost unperurbed. The long vigils and fastings and hardships have emaciated his body, and this is weak. But his communings with the spirit world have made him feel that he has a mission, and that he is essential to the wellbeing of his people. He has grown within the last few days to believe he is an apostle and a bringer of good, and in his mind he feels these warriors must in their own interests accept him. Nevertheless, there is the possibility of their not doing so. No messenger has reached him from the secret conclave held yonder behind the hills. Soon he will know, and now he pulls himself together, and at first with quavering voice and trembling limb he holds the sacred pipe aloft and prays. Immediately in front of him is the chosen chief of the warriors, who gives no indication of what he is going to do in this matter. In silence he and the entire assemblage listen as the aspirant for priestly honors seems to forget himself in the intenseness of his purpose. His voice gathers strength, his limbs cease to tremble, and with native and pure eloquence he calls upon the deity, to bless this gathering, to pity his children, to accept their sacrifices, to smile upon their effort. His metaphors are beautiful, his similes are fine, the range of his thought reaches the heavens above, and covers the earth beneath.

There is a spell that accompanies the prayer. His whole soul is in it. If you and I had been there, my reader friend, we would have seen the countenance of the warrior chief undergo a change. Fence as he will he is caught, and as we look we say to ourselves, "He will accept the sacred pipe."

And presently, as the priest stops, he steps forward and with a majestic wave upward and downward and all around, he hands the sacred emblem to the warrior. While the crowd watches him in breathless expectancy, the latter takes it from him, also lifts it heavenward and then earthward, and then all around the complete circle, and the air rings with joyous acclamations. The feast is to take place, and the time is now. This being settled, the warriors parade around the camp in full review. Others go and cut down the medicine tree, and now the warriors break ranks, and dashing into the camp open the lodges, and take from them the young women of the camp and hurry these along with them to help bring in the idol tree. Many long lines are fastened to this tree, and the women on foot, and the warriors on horseback take hold of these lines and pull together, and thus proceed homeward. Others act as drivers and shout and fire off their guns to urge on the men and women. As the camp is neared immense crowds of the old and infirm, and of women and children join in the march. Thus the medicine tree is brought to the spot where the temple is to stand. Meanwhile others are cutting and hauling home the



posts and pillars and beams required for the big lodge. Not a nail or pin is used in this structure. Each joint and splice is firmly secured with green hide, which as it dries becomes very tight and strong. All work with alacrity. Everything about the erection of the temple is done on the principle that the king's business requires haste.

When the medicine tree is raised in place, the conjurers make a special effort with medicine rattles and religious singing. Some make the nest in the medicine tree, or as it might fittingly be called, the sacrificial table, and fasten in and on this the sacrifices which have been gathered through the previous moons.

All the timbers in place, the whole is covered with the lodges of the principal men in the camp, it being thought an honor to have these used in this way.

And now the high priest approaches. He has a big buffalo head mask, both himself and the head well sprinkled with earth. Stepping slowly, and wailing as he walks, he enters the temple. Immediately on his entrance there is made the inner circle for those who have vows and will dance through the long hours. Then a spot in the temple is selected for the drummers and singers, and these come in turns, so that the choir is continuous, day and night, during the festival. Fire is placed in four places and on these fires are put sweet smelling herbs, which, as they burn, create incense. Then the high priest takes a whole parchment and speaks to the Great Spirit, and to all the lesser powers. Then

he swings the parchment four times, while all the dancers blow their horn whistles. The high priest now throws the parchment into the centre, and all the drummers and singers strike up, and the entire company join in the chorus. In the inner circle, and immediately around the medicine tree, the real dancers who are to undergo torture are arranging themselves. Some of these attach long lines to the medicine tree, and then passing the end through the muscles of their arms, thus dance and swing around the circle. Others hang guns to the tendons of their backs, and dance with these swinging and jerking about them. Others go from out the camp, and finding the skull of a buffalo bull with the horns attached, pass a line through the eyelet and then hitch themselves to the other end of the line through the tendons of the back and drag the head to the temple, entering amongst the dancers for the rest of the festival. The self-tortured and the dancers do not eat or drink until the afternoon of the third day. At that time the warriors in costume come in a body to the temple, the most renowned in the lead, all singing as they march, either on foot or on horseback, and form a circle just outside the first lodge. Then come those who make gifts, and horses and guns and blankets and robes are placed in the ring as a general offering, being afterwards distributed to the needy and infirm. Then the bravest warriors are led out into the centre, and made to recite their exploits and escapades, and between these recitals the various orders of dancers alter-

nate in exhibition of their peculiar skill. Inside the temple torture and thirst and exhaustion. Outside, declamation and glory and joyous celebration.

And as the sun draws near to the earth on the evening of the third day, the annual festival is finished. From thenceforth for the rest of the season the bare poles of the big lodge and from the top of which there will be fluttering in the breeze the various sacrifices made by the people, will remain as marking the spot where the annual festival was kept.

Our warriors took part with their people in this religious gathering, and to one constituted as White Buffalo was, all this was done with great reverence. In his way, he was profoundly religious. While he took no part in the torture dance, yet he believed with his people that this also was proper. Soon after they were through with the thirst dance, the large camp began to break up. Those of the Antelope and his party moved back into their own country, and White Buffalo and the camp to which he belonged went down what is now known as the Qu'Appelle, and then northward across to the minglings of the Beaver and Swan. They said:

"We will allow two moons to pass, and then if the spirits are willing we will again meet, and sojourn together."

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A Brave Trip Among the Sioux.

IT WAS NOW MIDSUMMER, and all wood and plain animals were in good order. The berries were ripening. It was a period of comfort and fatness with the people of the great West. Nature was taking on beauty and richness every day, and these nomadic people in their philosophic way gratefully acknowledged the Good Spirit's lavish bestowment and with full hearts enjoyed life. These were great days with *Nagos* and her husband. She was beginning to learn that she could not always have him with her. These long trips to war, they were lonesome times, and again there were days and nights when he was away on the hunt. But in all this she found great happiness. *Nagos* had won the hearts of these plain peoples. Her husband's reputation had made them to take great interest in this young woman he had brought from the far north. But, by this time, they had come to know that *Nagos* was also a great woman. She was beautiful, she was brave, she was forever kind. Anyone in



trouble felt that they could go to *Nagos*, she would help. Her father and mother were both more than usual in herb lore. This they had taught her, and she, being naturally quick and an adept in nursing, had already acquired a strong influence in this camp of her adoption. Thus these young people were the admired and the much loved of their friends, and the days were full of joy.

However, Snake Skin was anxious that his young chief and himself should do something that would bring more glory and respect to themselves and their people. So he began to sound White Buffalo. Said he:

"We have gone into the hunting grounds of the Blackfeet and the Bloods, but there are the great warriors, the Sioux, the unconquerable."

The Cree word for the Sioux is *Pwotuk*, signifying "those you balk at," really meaning the unconquered, and Snake Skin would day after day bring up this subject, doing what he could to stir White Buffalo's ambition, out on a quest after the Sioux.

At last there came a time when White Buffalo turned upon him and said: "We will go into the Sioux country, you and I, without letting our people know, without asking anyone to accompany us. Are you willing?"

And at first Snake Skin was almost afraid to say yes, but he thought how he had brought this on himself, and he answered: "I am willing."

And so very soon there came a night and neither White Buffalo nor Snake Skin returned to camp, and the next night came and *Nagos* and her new mother and all the camp were anxious, but there were no tidings, and during the third day *Kosapachekao* went into a trance, and returning, having sent his spirit afar, he told the expectant multitude that these young men were away south striking for the Sioux country. He, moreover, told them that he believed their effort would be successful.

"They will enter the Sioux camp, they will come home with horses from the Sioux. Such is the skill of White Buffalo, such is his pluck, as that himself and friend will do great things before they return to us. But they will return unharmed. This I believe."

Thus the Seer comforted *Nagos* and her mother. But the days were long and the nights seemed longer, and the camp moved on further, and the young men came not.

Following the war party of two, we will cross what is now the forty-ninth parallel, we will leave the fountain heads of the streams that flow northward and eastward into the Hudson's Bay, and presently we will find our hero and his companion camped on the banks of a little stream whose waters are stretching away to reach the Gulf of Mexico. Only by hearing of it had either of these men any knowledge of this country. All was new. Every day and every move was adventure. They had now travelled ten nights, and no sign of the people

they were looking for. On south and a little west was their course, and in that great big region which is fittingly termed today Dakota. Presently they found tracks of strange Indians. They eagerly examined these tracks, and came to the conclusion that they were those of hunters belonging to some camp still farther south. They concluded to follow these tracks, and the next day came upon others, then they were sure that somewhere in advance was a camp. Carefully and stealthily they scouted and that evening sighted a large group of Sioux lodges.

Secreting themselves, they watched their enemies. These were the men that their people dreaded. These were the men whose valor had been told in story all over the northern half of the continent. The Indians of all the tribes conceded that the Sioux stood at the head among men as a warrior, and now in sight of this large camp these two brave hearts were planning some feat that would prove to the Sioux, as also to their own people, that there were men of pluck and daring, willing to venture and even die, among the Crees as well as among the Sioux.

When night came upon them, White Buffalo said to his friend: "I propose that we stay here until tomorrow night, that we rest tonight, and then tomorrow find out all we can about these people, count their lodges, watch them in their life, as much as we can take stock of their horses, and who knows, perhaps we may see them hunting, perhaps we may see them racing, and in

that way we can find out which of their horses it will be worth while for us to risk our lives for. I do not know how you feel, Snake Skin, but I do not want to kill any of these people unless I have to. I think that if we can take some good horses out of their camp and perhaps some of their equipment, then we will have done sufficient."

And Snake Skin said:

"You are my chief, verily I think as you do."

And they rested.

The wolves howled on the hills on every hand. The coyotes joined in their nightly choruses. But these men slept. And the daylight came, and from the most advantageous summit they watched the camp of the Sioux, and before the sun was high they had their first opportunity, for not far from where they were in hiding a bunch of buffalo was feeding, and presently they saw a mounted man come out and reconnoitre, and soon they knew by the stir in camp that a run was on, and in a little while they had the satisfaction of watching the hunters ride forth, and the run take place within a reasonable distance of where they were. They saw some splendid horses dashing out from the rest in the race, and easily overtaking the buffalo and giving their riders a first chance at the game.

"There," said White Buffalo, "Snake Skin, do you see that white horse?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"Keep your eye on him. I will watch that big black, for we know that they are good. No matter how many we may be able to secure, let us try and bring them out."

So they watched the hunt and the return to the camp from the hunt, and they followed up, and from a nearer vantage point located the lodges in the camp to which these horses belonged. Thus they spent the day. They might have killed some Sioux who ventured out from camp, White Buffalo's unerring archery would have permitted him thus to do, but as he had said, he did not want to kill. To come and see these great warriors in their own home land, to have travelled thus afar in an entirely new country, and now to have been fortunate in placing good horses, and to have the possibilities before them during the coming night in making these horses their own in accord with the code of honor of the day and time, was in his thought sufficient. Quietly, he hummed his hymn and waited with his friend for the night, but while they waited and watched suddenly a little way from the summit of a hill, there stood a wolf. Snake Skin saw him first, and he pointed and White Buffalo looked. Ah, here was the spirit of his dream, and both young men hummed a song of thanksgiving. White Buffalo was not alone, his *Powakun* had come with him away into the land of the Sioux. Both were now exultant. What they had seen augured success, and thus they were stimulated and greatly encouraged.

As the evening came on they drew up nearer to the camp. So carefully had they scouted, so wisely had they covered their approach, and chosen the ground, that they felt sure there was hardly any possibility of detection. They could see but as they felt could not be seen. White Buffalo was a born scout, and his life up to this time had been full of practice. And thus darkness came.

"And now," said White Buffalo, "we know this country and where we are will be a good place for us to meet, if we live to come out of that camp. You, my friend, are going after that white horse, and as many others as you can bring. I am going after that black horse, and as many others as I can bring. I saw him just as it got dark being led up to the lodge. Doubtless you watched the white horse."

"Yes, I did," said Snake Skin.

"Well now, as the fires go out, as the people who are not on guard fall asleep, we will separate, and each go his own way, and then, if we may, here we will meet again."

Thus these men separated. Out into the darkness of the rank summer's night, in a strange land, and right into and among the lodges of a strange people, and these people renowned for their warlike skill and great bravery. Yet neither of these young Crees flinched in their enterprise. With White Buffalo, he never thought of danger to himself. He was one of those serene, cool, ever ready hearts, forever willing to

do and dare. With Snake Skin it was a case of emulation and imitation and sublime confidence in his leader. Nevertheless, it takes pluck and strong nerve to enter into the home of watchful foes, men trained to listen and perceive. On in among the lodges, to be a Sioux if possible for the time being, to avoid the dogs, to steal in around the watchful guards, to be noiseless, and imperceptible. This requires strength of muscle as well as force of will. Crawling, crouching, creeping, hardly breathing, patiently, perseveringly, each made his way towards the goal he had set before him.

White Buffalo well remembered the location of the lodge. He had marked it, the very spot it stood upon was photographed on his memory. There he had seen the big black led up to. And now he was close upon the lodge. All was quiet. How many guards he had passed he did not know, but here, in the inner circles of the camp, was this one, and now he saw the horse, and with the greatest stealth and quietness of action, he presently touched the horse and the horse did not start. Then he slipped up and felt the lariat from the neck of the horse, and then, feeling for the other end, he soon knew that it went into the lodge.

"Aha," he thought, "the Sioux has gone to sleep with the other end of the lariat in his hand. Well, let him keep it."

So he cut the line just outside the lodge, and then he felt around for anything that might be left outside belonging to this lodge, and here just back of the lodge

on a triangle was a robe and under that robe were some moccasins. So he took the robe and put it around him, and tucked the moccasins in his belt, and then began to cut the lines of other horses, and to drive before him some loose animals; and thus slowly he worked his way through between the lodges, moving this bunch before him. Always leading the big black. He knew well that the greatest danger was before him, when that he would reach the outskirts of the camp. There the vigilance of the guards would be keenest.

Unless one has lived with these native peoples and travelled with them, and become acquainted with their language and life, and listened to the many tales of the past, one can hardly appreciate the patient skill of a warrior situate as White Buffalo was at this time. To get away from this camp with these horses without being felt, without having given a sign, was his object, inasmuch as if he was discovered, then his friend would also in all probability be discovered, and as they were now separate, and each acting independent of the other, it behooved them to give no alarm if possible.

After a long time White Buffalo felt that he was beyond the last guard, and still he continued to silently and quietly herd this bunch of horses towards the place appointed for their meeting. Midnight was past when he reached the place, and now he waited in expectancy, and by and by was glad to catch the note of a coyote not many arrow-shots from him. Then he quietly answered. Then an owl hooted, and he knew Snake



Skin was coming, and in a little while Snake Skin was with him, and out of the darkness there came in view some horses, and among these was the white one.

"What did you bring?" said Snake Skin.

"I brought a robe and some moccasins."

"Well, I have a saddle blanket and some good lines," said Snake Skin; and they each counted their horses. White Buffalo had ten, and Snake Skin eight, and they were each holding the horses that they had picked during the day as they saw them race in the hunt. More than this, they had gone into the very centre of the great camp of the much-dreaded Sioux. This to both men was much more satisfactory than the capture of the horses, however much they delighted in this. So now they sat them down side by side and chanted a little hymn of victory and praise. Then they mounted and started northward, and for hours they travelled. They knew full well that perhaps before morning these horses would be missed. At any rate with daylight the hue and cry, and then the chase would come, but they felt quite secure, and on they went. And now they ran as men in those days could run, for miles and miles they ran, driving the horses before them. All that day they journeyed with little stop, watching forever, inasmuch as they might meet a war party, they might be seen. Therefore under cover as much as possible they travelled steadily north, every little while breaking out in song. And not until darkness covered them did they stop to rest the horses, and themselves, for a little while.


Snake Skin said: "I am glad we came. I am glad you consented to come. No young men of our age in all the camps of our people have gone as far as we have, and have done what we have."

"Yes," said White Buffalo, "I am glad for your sake. It was mostly for your sake, Snake Skin, that I came. I wanted you to prove yourself, and you have done so, and with good heart you can travel north this autumn. When the earth is painted and the world is glad, then verily, my friend, I trust, will be greatly glad also. Yes, look up, Snake Skin, behold the stars, and think of the Little Star."

"Oh, you need not tell me to do that," said Snake Skin, "I am always thinking of her."

And they slept a little while, and with the stars still studding the heavens they started northward.

Away back in yonder camp the life was going on as usual. Men were hunting; men, women and children were picking berries, and drying them for future use. Immense quantities of the saskatoon and choke-cherry were annually gathered and dried and packed away for winter use by these nomads. The camp had gone well into the park country, and in measure because of this was comparatively safe from the persistent enemy. The plain Indian shunned the timber as much as possible. While all were anxious about the absent leader and his companion, still the multitude put great faith in the seer's prophetic announcement. He had assured them that our warriours would return in due time. In the



lodge of White Buffalo there was constant anxiety, and Nagos was forever petitioning the great good spirit and all the spirits on behalf of her absent husband.

Nothing special had occurred in the lives of those who belonged to this moving home. Going back to our little party of two, we find them travelling steadily northward, resting in hidden spots during the day, and travelling by night. If the Sioux had made any attempt to follow them, they had given up, for now White Buffalo and Snake Skin were a long distance from the scene of their capture. However, as much as they might desire to escape from actual battle on this trip, it was their fate to meet one, for as they journeyed with the band of horses they had secured, it was almost impossible for them to cover their advance, and one day they were discovered by a war party which turned out to be some Sioux who were on their homeward journey, having failed to find the enemy. And now, descrying this little party of two men and their horses, they felt sure of taking them, and with whoops and yells they charged down upon White Buffalo and his companion.

When they came in full view, Snake Skin, counting their number, said:

"There are just twelve of them," and at first he proposed that they rush their horses and thus escape a fight, but White Buffalo was in no mood for this. His plan was to bunch the horses in a little swamp, and then on foot meet these footmen who were running down upon himself and friend. Said he to Snake Skin:

"Not until we cannot hold them back or drive them off will we take to our horses, and try to escape. In the meantime, let us show them how far our arrows will fly and do good work."

And then he calmly pulled some arrows from his quiver and began to straighten them, and Snake Skin, stimulated by his example, did likewise. By this time they made sure that the party running towards them was Sioux. The twelve men, being Sioux, and also as six to one, had no doubt of the issue. Who were these that were driving horses from the south country? Who would dare to go down single-handed among their people, and bring away their stock in this manner? Thus they thought and thus they communed with one another, as they shortened the distance between themselves and the two men, whom they felt were already in their hands.

However, White Buffalo thought otherwise. He had been measuring the distance; he had been calculating the strength of the breeze; he had been testing his bow, and looking along his arrow, and now was calmly waiting for the foremost Sioux to come within the range of his unerring aim. Presently, the swiftest man of the twelve was near enough, and White Buffalo pulled his bow and let his first arrow fly, and met his foe squarely in the chest with its sharp thrust. And the Sioux, dropping his weapons, staggered and fell. Such audacity enraged the others, and they came rushing on, but the first one that bounded within the range

of this great archer also met his fate, for another arrow came circling through the air and struck him likewise. And thus White Buffalo shot arrow after arrow, until his share of the enemy lay prone and dying on the plain. Snake Skin had stood and looked and wondered, he reserving his arrows for nearer shooting. But feeling now greatly emboldened by the skill and wonderful aim of his friend.

The Sioux on their part had learned the folly of coming within the range, and thus the six survivors withdrew, and gathering on a knoll seemed to take council as to what should be done. Here was a wonderful foe, a man of long reach and sure aim, such as they had never met before. And there he stood as calm and cool as if all this was commonplace to him. These were brave men whom he had shot, and their companions wisely felt it would be utter folly for them to thus continue the fight, and they concluded to withdraw; and White Buffalo, seeing this, said to Snake Skin, "Run back and bring up our horses, and I will move on to where our enemies are lying." And in a short time they were up among the dead and dying Sioux. Said White Buffalo: —

"We will wait until all are dead," and before long this came to pass. Then, in their way and in accord with the code of the time, they scalped their foes and took their weapons, and such portion of their apparel as they thought fit. And in all this they were watched by the balance of the Sioux from a respectful

distance. Then, mounting their horses, and singing a hymn of victory, they drove their captured bunch northward.—Said White Buffalo:

“I did not want to kill these men, but they were twelve to two. If we allowed them to come near, they would have killed us. I hoped that when I shot the first one they would stop. I hoped when I shot the second one they would stop, but on they came, foolish brave men.” And Snake Skin answered:

“Who would have thought that you could kill men with an arrow at such a distance? It was reasonable for them to think that your first shot was a chance one, but you never missed. Now they know and I know, as never before, how perfect you are in this art.”

And he broke out into a song of victory. But White Buffalo did not join, for already he was lamenting the act of killing these men. For days they travelled and met no further incident, and now they crossed the Chain of Lakes River. They were coming into their own country, and their hearts were full of hope as to meeting their people somewhere shortly.

As yet they had seen no fresh tracks. The people might be near or far. This was a big country, and a few hundred nomadic Indians were as lost in it, and it was the third day from the Qu'Appelle before they found their people, and rode triumphantly into their home camp. There was great joy throughout this camp because of their coming. Nagos had endeared herself to these people, and her constant looking and

waiting and longing had become part of the life of the whole camp. All were in sympathy. All were anxious about White Buffalo and his companion. And now this wonderful woman, who had become their queen, was forever thinking and longing for White Buffalo, all the people of the camp had been for days in ardent sympathy with her. The seer had sent his spirit forth.

"They are coming," said he, but he could not tell how many nights might intervene.

"They are coming, but I do not know where they are," was his message, and now here they were with the horses and equipments and scalps and arms of the dreaded Sioux. Seldom had any of these come thus far into this northland at this time. And in this way White Buffalo had proved to his people that he was brave and skilful; and neither distance nor yet the undaunted quality of his enemy stayed him in his course. He was a chief, born to the place, and the spirits were in his favor.

And thus Snake Skin also won his place among the people, and to his own great satisfaction felt that he had done something worthy of the maiden he longed to possess.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Keeping the Rendezvous.*

THE SUMMER was now far spent, and the time had come for the people to again converge, and presently the gathering of the different bands took place, and it was decreed to move out and make a dash after buffalo. For buffalo were, after all, the staff of life. The wood animals were all very well in their place, and as a change, but all over the great West the people of the many tribes did not think that they were really living unless they were in some way partaking of the buffalo.

Our hero and his friend had left the great herd moving northward, some distance south of the Chain of Lakes River. But by this time they would be across, so everyone felt. And the camp moved to intercept the course of the great herd, and once more White Buffalo was at his favorite employment, providing food for those dependent upon him, bringing in meat and hides and at the same time enjoying to the full that side of his nature which was domestic and homelike. For a full moon the camp circled around in touch with the





buffalo. Much provision was made, many hides were taken, many a thrifty matron gathered sufficient to renew her lodge with. It took from sixteen to twenty and sometimes more large hides to make a lodge, and it was a great source of satisfaction when a sufficient number of real good hides were procured for this purpose. Then there was the moccasining of the camp, and furthermore the multiple lines that were needed in the equipment of a lodge, and also in the packing and handling of horses and dogs, as these were used in transport. All the saddles, all the saddle bags, all the travois nettings, all the lariats, and packing lines, were as a continuous demand upon the hunter, and upon the herd that he preyed on.

One day the scouts brought in word that a very large herd was on the plain within easy reach of the camp, and half of the men were told off to make the hunt, the other half instructed to protect the lodges. And it was at this time that White Buffalo again distinguished himself as a great hunter and a wonderful archer, as he went forth with the crowd to hunt on this special day. The country was good, being more or less level; the weather was propitious, and the cattle of the plain were now generally in good order, and some one said:

"This may be our last run for this trip. Let the hunters kill as many as they can, let the pack animals follow up to bring in all the meat possible," and every one was stimulated to exert himself for the good of the commonwealth.

Picture a big plain, gently undulating, and covering it here and there and in large places almost altogether a great herd of buffalo. Know these to be wild and swift and as eager as possible to shun the presence of man. Then see the little crowd of hunters approaching onto the plain. There might be some hundreds of these, but they would be but as a speck in the bigness of territory and in the presence of this small fraction of the great herd. Only those who have beheld the multitude can realize how they did at times cover the earth.

And now the charge is about to be made. The best horses are mounted. White Buffalo is again on the back of his old favorite, Blackfoot. And soon the captain of the hunt gives the word, and they are away, and White Buffalo, remembering the admonition of the morning, lets his first arrow fly, and hits a fine cow, and again he looks through the dust and whirl of the mad race, in and out among the plunging, rushing mass of life, and he sees another one and presses his horse towards it, and again another arrow speeds to the vital spot, and thus he pulls and picks and presses his horse with gentle admonitions after his victim, and pulling up has shot and killed fifteen fat cows. The most that any other man killed in that day's race was five. But here were the fifteen splendid animals stretched along the course that Blackfoot, the great war and hunting horse, had carried his master over.

Nor was he winded at the end of the race, but his master had said:

"'Tis enough. It will be late before we have these animals skinned and cut up and packed to carry home to camp tonight."

Fifteen buffalo with bow and quiver in one short race was great work, even for a great hunter to accomplish. So the camp thought, so *Nagos* thought, and all men said:

"White Buffalo is the best shot we have known."

When all this meat was either eaten or packed up in dried meat and pemmican, when all these hides were fleshed and scraped and made into parchment light and handy to carry, then this camp moved back northward and in due time, having reached the vicinity of the Assiniboine, or Beaver River, broke up into its several tribal quantities, and White Buffalo and his party crossed the river and went on over into the valley of the Swan, and slowly journeyed northward. For the autumn had come, and the time was approaching which had been fixed by the North Wind Maker as the period of their gathering away in the northland. Towards this many were looking with eager anticipation; *Nagos* to see her parents, to behold the land of her nativity; White Buffalo to fulfil his appointment, to give joy to his wife, to meet her parents and their friends to whom he was forever grateful, and for whom he had profound respect; *Niska* to be back with his own people once more. He had gone through many experiences, he had

crossed the great plains, he had ascended along the banks of the mighty waters, he had seen the great mountains, he had participated in war, he had done good scouting, he had killed some of the hereditary enemies of the people of his nation. He had done wonderful things for a boy of his age. He had taken an active part in the life of another people, and was now in measure a plainsman. And yet he longed to hear his mother's voice, and to go out in the forest with his father, and once more to launch the canoe and paddle with or against the stream. Thus he was longing for the northland. But perhaps there was no one so full of intense desire to make this northern trip more than Snake Skin. This was natural, and these were natural men and women. Some intensely so. And Snake Skin was growing more and more into strong character every day. His contact, his association, his love and respect for White Buffalo and *Nagos* were as a resurrection unto him all the time. He was longing for the north country, for therein dwelt the Little Star. And soon the day came, and White Buffalo said to his people who were with him:

"Abide ye in this valley, and move to and fro in it, and myself and wife and Snake Skin and *Niska*, we will leave you for a time, and the spirits willing, will come again before the winter."

White Buffalo planned to reach the rendezvous about the same time as the autumn before, and thus leisurely he travelled with his party down the valley

and over the divide, and in due time again beheld the smoke of the lodges of the wood people. Thus far these had come with their canoes, on the banks of the little stream they had turned these up, and now, having set their lodges, were looking southward, and in the hearts of the parents there was great expectancy.

It has often seemed to the writer that these native peoples, because of their intense domesticity and continuity of family association, were more possessed of affection for their children than the people of a more stirring civilization. These families seldom separated, and in the present case it was a new experience for these parents and their people to have one of their number marry a stranger and go away into what was to them a distant land, a distinct life. So now with longing hearts they kept looking southward, and it was a time of great joy when presently from out the forest glade there debouched the little party wherein their loved ones were.

The North Wind Maker eagerly grasped the hand of White Buffalo, and said:

"You are a true man, you have come even as you promised. You have kept your word. You have brought me my daughter, and verily I have but to look on her to know that you have been good and kind unto her. I can see that her life has been full of happiness. I am glad—we are all glad." And thus they met, and their gathering was full of joy. *Niska* had so much to tell. He took the place of Snake Skin. Snake Skin

hitherto had been the spokesman. He had related the experiences, he had described the country. He had told about the wars. He had given them wonderful descriptions of the buffalo. But now Snake Skin is silent, and *Niska* takes up the story, and *Nagos*, when she has recovered from the joy of meeting her parents and becomes normal once more, says:

"Where is Snake Skin—what is the matter with Snake Skin? Has he lost his tongue?"

And *Niska* stops to tell her, "Why, don't you know? He is looking for the Little Star. He has no time to talk. Let him alone, *Nagos*."

In pleasant intercourse and exchange of experience, and occasional hunting parties, a few days and nights quickly pass, and soon each of these distinct parties is reminded that they must separate, and once more take up the life peculiar to themselves—the one to embark in their canoes and travel and drift and sail away into the farther north country, while the others would proceed southward, taking up their overland methods of transport and life.

As he had promised, the father of the Little Star gave her to Snake Skin. White Buffalo and all the hunters made a great hunt, and coming home from this, and the meat of the various animals having been brought in, a feast was made, and this was the occasion of the giving of the Little Star to Snake Skin. The father told the assembled people: "Even as it has been with *Nagos*, so now verily it shall come to pass

with our Little Star. We gave our word to this young man from the south country. We knew our daughter had given her heart, and today we give her into his keeping. We are glad to know that the mating of *Nagos* with White Buffalo has been blessed, and we hope that so it will be with these young people who are now to become husband and wife." And thus without ceremony or ritual or ecclesiasticism or civil or religious law as we know it, these people were married, and doubtless in the sight of the Great Spirit their union was as legal as any on earth.

As was fitting, the North Wind Maker also gave the young couple his blessing, and told the people that when White Buffalo prevailed upon them to give him *Nagos* to wife, and took her away into the distant south country, he and his wife were very anxious at times. But now, the moons had come and gone, and their children had been permitted to come north and visit them, and the recital of their experiences by his son and daughter had filled his heart with great encouragement. And now he believed firmly that there were great and good people in that south land. *Nagos* had sung their praise; *Niska* was full of their brave acts and kindly deeds, and therefore he could with all his spirit give his blessing to the Little Star and her husband. Doubtless these, like *Nagos* and her husband, would periodically come back into this northern country. He hoped they would. And now he would ask the Great Spirit

and all the spirits to bless this union, and to go with these young people and in due time might they all meet on the same spot.

And as he finished these words, the dogs of the camp set up a great clamor, and rushed towards the bank of the little stream where the canoes of the northern people had been left, and suddenly out from among these there came the Little Beaver, fully armed, and in splendid costume. Every one in the camp but White Buffalo recognized him.

"What brings him here at this time?" was the question. Snake Skin bent his bow and pulled some arrows from his quiver. Here was his rival. Here was the man who had desired to kill him.

"What brings him here at this juncture?" Others of the Indians seized their weapons also, for it looked as if this man had come to disturb the peace of the time. But the Little Beaver came boldly up, and holding up his hand intimated that he was there as a friend.

"Think no trouble in your hearts, my friends," was his message. "I have been impelled to come here at this time. I want to say that I have no evil in my heart towards the man who has come into our country and won the heart and love of the Little Star. I desired to do this same but it was not my fate. A better man came for her."

Then he briefly recounted the scene of last winter's night when, with his heart full of jealousy and hatred, he had tracked his rival to their camp and had deter-



mined to kill him if possible. Then he told how in all this he had been circumvented by Snake Skin, how Snake Skin had sprung upon him and taken away his gun from him, and marched him as a prisoner into their winter camp, and how Snake Skin had then given him his life, and how this had worked upon his heart and feelings until all jealousy and all hatred had gone therefrom. And now he had been impelled to seek this spot and to come here at this time to give his blessing also to the union of Snake Skin and Little Star.

Said he: "My heart will go with you, and I will forever wish you prosperity and happiness." And all the people shouted in acclaim, because of this man's change of heart.

Then the people made ready to separate, the North Wind Maker and his friends and the Little Beaver to re-embark in their small canoes and go back into their great wilderness home country, and White Buffalo and Snake Skin and their young wives also made ready to return south to their people. *Niska* would fain have gone with them, but he felt in his heart it was his duty to stay with his parents for the coming winter. Even though his affections were pulling him southward, yet he elected to remain in the north country for some moons, determining that if his life was spared he would again go south. *Papamotao's* daughter was calling him, so he felt.

We will now travel with this little company on their homeward journey. Slowly they climb out of the valley, and after a time find themselves once more upon the summit of the range of hills from which White Buffalo many moons since had looked down upon the smoke of the lone lodge away in the distance. Here, as was fitting, they stayed their journey and alighted from their horses and looked upon the scene. To White Buffalo the place was sacred. To him it had been as the turning of his life, the starting point towards a great blessing, one for which he was forever grateful. Thus his heart was full. He remembered himself alone peering from this hill summit. He remembered again when with his young wife and his two friends, Snake Skin and *Niska*, he was starting out on his honeymoon trip. He thought of the incidents of their lives since that time. Involuntarily he moved towards the Little Mother when he remembered the days of her capture by the Blackfoot warrior, and his heart swelled in thanksgiving for the great happiness which had been his since the previous autumn. How his home had been blessed, how his lodge had been consecrated unto himself and his people because of this gift of the Great Spirit in his life.

White Buffalo in his way was a most pious man. To him everything that was good came from the Great Spirit. Therefore he was always in the mood of worship, and forever grateful. Today he is full of thanksgiving, and so is *Nagos*. She had spent thirteen

moons away from her people, never a day from her home before, always with her parents and people; and now she had been absent from them for thirteen moons, and re-visiting them found them well, and again she was going forth, and her heart was full of joy. If last autumn she was happy to leave parents and home and all her previous life and go forth with this man into a strange country and among a strange people, today much more so without any risk, without a tremor of spirit, she stands beside her husband, and is conscious of reigning supreme in his heart.

Thus it was with White Buffalo and *Nagos*. Life to them was exceedingly sweet, and this world was as a heaven below. And here is our friend Snake Skin. He has won the Little Star. She is with him, blushing but confident. *Nagos* has told her so much about Snake Skin and about the life in the south country that while her heart is all a-tremble, yet nevertheless she feels secure in this man's love. Then she has this wonderful little woman, her older sister, and so she is greatly comforted. And as they stand and look upon the scene White Buffalo sings in joy, and all take up the chorus. And away yonder on another knoll there appears the great wolf, and the men and *Nagos* look and are glad, and the Little Star looks and cannot but exclaim:

"Oh, see the great wolf standing on the hill yonder," and she wonders that none of her friends seem to notice. Later on in course of time she will understand that the great wolf is the visible representation of White Buffalo's *Pawakun*.

Then Snake Skin says: "We are indeed greatly blessed, and now let us continue our journey," and they wind their way down the hill and through the forest, and camp that evening upon the spot where Snake Skin was almost killed on their previous journey south.

That night, when the lodge was set, and the supper was eaten, *Nagos* gave them her account of the scene of the previous autumn. And Little Star fairly shuddered at the thought that Snake Skin had been so near death. As on the previous trip, the season was propitious. The earth was glad, the summer had done its work, all nature was now arrayed in beauty. Animal life was at its best, and, as is the condition in Canada's great northwest, the general autumn weather is magnificent. Thus our little party moved slowly southward. Snake Skin seemed to have great good luck. One day he tracked an immense moose, and discovered him, and was fortunate in his archery, and killed him. This caused them to camp in a beautiful spot and dry the meat, and dress the hide. And again Snake Skin went out hunting, and this time a monster elk fell to his kill. And *Nagos* said:

"Surely the Little Star is bringing you most wonderful good fortune, Snake Skin. You never did anything like this before. That was a tremendous moose you killed, and this is one of the greatest elk I ever saw. You must always be thankful to me, Snake Skin, for helping you as I have to win the Little Star."



"Ha!" said Snake Skin, "I am always thankful, Nagos, and I will forever sing your praise, even if I do not become a great hunter like White Buffalo, or even a great warrior like White Buffalo. Still, if I can be in a small way like him, I will be thankful."

Another day Snake Skin was out alone and he encountered a big bear and slew him. "And now, indeed," Nagos said, "surely the spirits are with you, Snake Skin, and it is very true that much blessing has come to you with the Little Star."

And slowly moving southward, with horses heavy laden with dried provisions, and moose and elk parchment hides, these young people made their journey. And again it came to pass that White Buffalo was given to save his friend's life. Emboldened by his luck, Snake Skin had again gone forth alone. But this day he came upon a group of bear, and sending an arrow at one, he but wounded it, and drew the whole pack upon himself, and speedily would have been overpowered and clawed and chewed to pieces had not White Buffalo burst upon the scene, and again with his marvellous archery and his undaunted pluck, become the saviour of his friend. He shot the bears one after another, and then throwing away his bow and quiver, rushed in with his knife and delivered Snake Skin. Fortunately, the latter had no limbs broken, but was pretty well clawed up and bitten. However, this time 'twas not his lungs or breath that became affected. So with the dressing and bandaging that White Buffalo

gave him he was able to reach camp. And now perforce our little party had to remain several days in the one place. Both White Buffalo and *Nagos* were skilful in dressing wounds, and they gave every attention to Snake Skin, and it was wonderful how his healthy, strong young manhood responded to their care. The Little Star was in great trouble at first, but Snake Skin's wonderful cheerfulness and sublime happiness greatly cheered her, and when she saw how *Nagos* and her husband took care of Snake Skin, then she plucked up and was very brave. While in this camp, White Buffalo determined to make a cache of provisions and hides. Said he:

"We may come this far during the winter, and if so we will have these splendid autumn provisions for our use."

So he continued to hunt and all worked with him in the filling of the cache with provisions. In the meantime, Snake Skin was recovering rapidly and soon they were again on their journey southward.

If one had approached this camp, this lonely lodge in the great wilderness of the northland, in the early morning of the day, or in the waning of the same, he would have heard the song of thanksgiving and petition, and he would have been compelled to say to himself, "These people are religious"; and if he had been permitted to join this little party, he would have found them intensely hospitable, anticipating his need and doing all they could for his comfort. Moreover, if be-



ing right-minded himself, he would have delighted in the simple and natural domesticity of the people in this lodge. Moreover, as his acquaintance might grow with these nomads, he would observe their great modesty. This was not assumed, but natural.

Snake Skin now being able to travel, and take a part in the duty and work of the journey, our little company went on more rapidly southward until White Buffalo, coming in one evening, said to them:

"I believe that before tomorrow's sun goes down we will meet some of our friends," and so it happened; for the next day they met a few lodges of their people, and among these was the seer, and also *Papamotao's* widow and her family, and once more they were all welcomed, and the Little Star was astonished at the warmth of the welcome that was given to *Nagos*. It was as if she was their own daughter and not a stranger. They also welcomed her. The seer said:

"We are all glad that you have come to us as the wife of our young man, Snake Skin. We all love Snake Skin, and we will take you in our hearts for his sake, and perhaps for your own sake. Your older sister is our queen. All our people love her. We will hope that when we are acquainted with you we will also love you as well." Thus the little stranger was bidden welcome into the lodges of her husband's tribe.

And now for some time they hunted with these friends, and slowly moved their camp southward as their

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occupation permitted, making caches of provisions as well as loading up all the transport that they had. Said the seer:

"It will be several days before we reach White Buffalo's parents and the rest of our people. In the meantime let us rejoice and improve the days, and be thankful."



CHAPTER XX.

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Our Hero is Made Head Chief.

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**W**HEN in the course of their journey they reached the other portion of the tribe, and were united once more, there was great satisfaction in the camp. White Buffalo had returned; White Buffalo was a source of strength to these people. They felt that in him they had a real leader, and the head chief, the aged man in the camp, said, "Let us be glad; let us heartily rejoice, for among ourselves there has arisen one worthy to lead. I do not know what may be in the thought of all the men and people in this camp, but I very well know what is in my own mind, and for some time I have said to myself, 'Now you can retire from the chieftainship of this people. You have been spared many years, and the people have listened unto you and obeyed you and followed your advice. You have great reason to be thankful. But now you are old and feeble, and in the meantime the Great Spirit has smiled upon you and upon your friends, for He has raised a man up who is worthy, who is strong,

who is brave, who is good, and He has blessed him. He has given him a good wife, a wonderful woman. Her own folk called her the Little Mother, and truly she is the good mother, for all our children believe in her and love her very much. And now this man and woman, they are already in this camp as our chief and queen. Therefore it is my wish, it is my strong desire, that ere I pass away this man and this woman shall be accepted as the chief man and woman in our camp. Tell me, oh my people, what you think."

And there came a unanimous shout of assent to the old chief's thought and desire, and he again spoke:

"Then, my friends, as we are of one mind in this matter, we will shortly fix a day and a time and a place, and I will step out into my own lodge and among my children and be as any other among you, and we will make White Buffalo and his wife, the Little Mother, as our chief ones in this camp."

And the whole tribe began to sing, and to rejoice, and the drums beat, and all took up the chorus of the praise of White Buffalo and his *Nagos*. Snake Skin was overjoyed. This he had hoped for, this he had felt was what ought to be. And the Little Star was also greatly rejoiced, for she saw how her husband felt, and she had profound love and respect for *Nagos* and White Buffalo, and the way and manner in which these were received among their people made her feel very much at home in this new environment.

In a short time the large camp moved onto a beautiful spot on the bank of the Beaver, and an immense pavilion was erected, where, amid feasting and dancing and much ceremonial, the chieftainship of this portion of the Cree nation was conferred on our hero. The retiring chief congratulated the camp on securing one so well qualified as White Buffalo to lead them. Said the venerable man:

"We live by the hunt, and we have been given a great hunter in this young man. He is equally good in the woods and on the plains. He is strong of limb and big of lung and very brave of heart. Distance and storm and fierceness of game make no difference to him. From the big *Mistaya*, the great grizzly, to the rabbit, he knows them, every one, and has hunted and killed of all. We have no man in this land who can use the weapons of our fathers like he can. Thus, my children, in this respect White Buffalo is a fitting leader.

"Then we, as a people, have many enemies, and these are numerous and strong, and we are forever in danger from them. During the last two summers this young man has shown that as our avenger and defender, he is the greatest among us. To him has been given wisdom and strength and he has made no mistakes since he came out as a young warrior. Already he has many scalps to his credit. Blackfeet and Sioux have fallen before his skill and bravery. In every opportunity he has shown himself as born to lead in

war. Our old leader, the Great Traveller, *Papamotao*, did say, "This man is chief among warriors. He is made for to be a trusted leader."

"Then, my friends, we all know his heart is good. He is a man of peace, he would not kill if it was not necessary to do so, and this is the kind of a war chief we want, a man of kind heart, strong in war and strong in peace.

"Every one in these lodges, and all our acquaintances, know that such a man is White Buffalo. More than this, he has the favor of the spirits. These blessed his childhood, these touched his heart, and guided his growth into young manhood; these sent him a strong and ever-watchful *Parwakun*, the spirit of his dream; these gave him a good father and mother, and when the time came led him forth into a strange and distant land, and there revealed to him a wonderful maiden, who now is his much-loved wife and is as the queen of our hearts in this camp. Thus you will see, my friends and children, it is fitting and it is right that we as a reasonable and grateful people, make this great and good man our head chief. Verily this is as my heart and head prompt me to desire and speak, and I believe this is as the great father and all the spirits would have us, as their children, to do at this time."

Thus spoke the aged chief, and without discussion all the people shouted:

"Even so may it come to pass. We want White Buffalo as our head chief!" And *Kosopachekao*, the seer, and Snake Skin, were sent to bring our hero in

order that this large camp would acclaim him chief. They found White Buffalo in his lodge, and told him their errand, and he answered:

"Surely it cannot be. I am not fit. I am still too young." But they prevailed upon him, and he said to Nagos:

"Come with me before the people," and she hastily made her toilet, and came with her husband to the place of honor in the big pavilion, and Snake Skin said:

"Oh, Chief and people! We have brought this man, White Buffalo, and his wife, Nagos, even as you bade us to do."

And all the camp shouted in acclaim, and the drums beat, and the multitude sang in the chorus as the seer and Snake Skin improvised a hymn of eulogy to the honor and praise of the new Chief. Then the aged Chief did say to White Buffalo:

"My son, we have chosen you as our Chief. We know you have not sought this place, but we also know that you will obey our call, and the call of the spirits, and be found in your place in our hearts and in our camp, and among our friends and enemies. And now from this day I retire, and you, my son, become Chief, and your good and beautiful wife, Nagos, will be your great helpmate in leading us as a people and camp, and may the Great Father and all the spirits bless and guide you at all times!"

Then White Buffalo spoke: "My friends, I am astonished at what you have done today. I am but as a child in your midst, and as our Chief has said, I have not sought this honor. You have thrust it upon me. But now, with the help of all the Chiefs and headmen, and with the faith of all our people, and the continued friendship of the Seer and Snake Skin, and with my own wife beside me, I will do my best to lead you both in peace and in war."

Just at this time, when White Buffalo ceased speaking, a boy called everyone's attention to the presence of a huge timber wolf, who from a nearby hill summit was quietly looking down upon the camp, and did not seem to feel any fear or strangeness in thus coming close to the crowd. And White Buffalo and Nagos and the Seer and Snake Skin looked and saw him, and the Seer broke out into one of his religious hymns, and when he was through all the camp did shout and sing and dance and feast, and were full of joy because of this great event in their history.

And now that we have fairly launched White Buffalo into his new career in the early years of the last century, and have tried faithfully to depict his manner of life at this time, we will leave him with you, who may read this humble tale of native life in Canada's great western territories, one hundred years ago. White Buffalo is Chief indeed, and Nagos is his queen. The Seer predicts for them a long and blessed reign, and feels honored as their constant friend. Snake Skin

has regenerated, and is loyal and true and is supremely happy, for the Little Star alternately smiles and blushes by his side, and both are proud to be so nearly allied to White Buffalo and Nagos.

And as this big wild wilderness country, with its countless buffalo, and abundant animal life, and continuous war and adventure between the tribes, will remain, even as we have narrated its conditions, for another half century or more, therefore we may again come before you with the further life and experience of White Buffalo and his people.

So now we will say adieu.



